



**Request for Application
for
The Comprehensive Approaches to Raising
Educational Standards (CARES) Plus Program
FY 2010 - 2013**



REVISED DECEMBER 1, 2010



**Comprehensive Approaches to Raising Educational Standards
(CARES) Plus Program**

Important Funding Application Action Dates

November 4 Thursday	RFA, Cover Letter and Letter of Intent (LOI) available on the First 5 California (F5CA) Web site at http://www.ccfc.ca.gov/commission/funding.asp
November 17, 2010 Wednesday	<p>RFA Information Session/Conference Call (two lines are reserved for each county):</p> <p>Time: 10:00 a.m. – noon Dial-in number: (888) 791-1856 Pass code: 57303</p> <p>First 5 California staff will provide a summary of the RFA and respond to questions.</p>
December 13, 2010 Monday	Deadline for First 5 county commission to submit to F5CA the electronic <u>and</u> original (hard copy) of Letter of Intent with signature.
December 16, 2010 Thursday	F5CA posts on its Web site Letters of Intent submitted from First 5 county commissions.
December 27, 2010 Monday	Deadline for local public entity to submit electronic and original (hard copy) of Letter of Intent. A local public entity may apply for funding through this RFA only if a First 5 county commission does not submit a LOI by the December 13, 2010, deadline OR expresses its intent not to submit an application.
December 30, 2010 Thursday	F5CA posts on its Web site Letters of Intent received from local public entities.
January 4, 2011 Tuesday	Final deadline for submission of RFA-related questions via e-mail, in writing, or by fax.
January 13, 2011 Thursday	F5CA posts on its Web site final RFA questions and answers.
January 18, 2011 Tuesday	Application submission deadline. F5CA must receive both an electronic and print copies of the application package (original application with signature, and two three additional hard copies, and one electronic copy). The one (1) electronic copy must be e-mailed to caresplus@ccfc.ca.gov . The four (4) hard copies must be received in the F5CA office by 5:00 p.m. on January 18, 2011. F5CA's business hours are 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Monday-Friday, except holidays. See pg. 36-37 for Application Submission requirements.
February 15, 2011 Tuesday	F5CA posts on its Web site matching awards and mails agreements to Lead Agencies.

Please Note: Questions regarding the RFA will be answered during the Information Session on November 17. Additional questions regarding the RFA (prior to or following the Information Session) will be accepted only by e-mail, in writing or by fax. Please use "CARES Plus RFA Questions" as the subject heading and send all questions by January 4, 2011, to caresplus@ccfc.ca.gov or by fax to

(916) 263-1360.

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FLOW DIAGRAMS

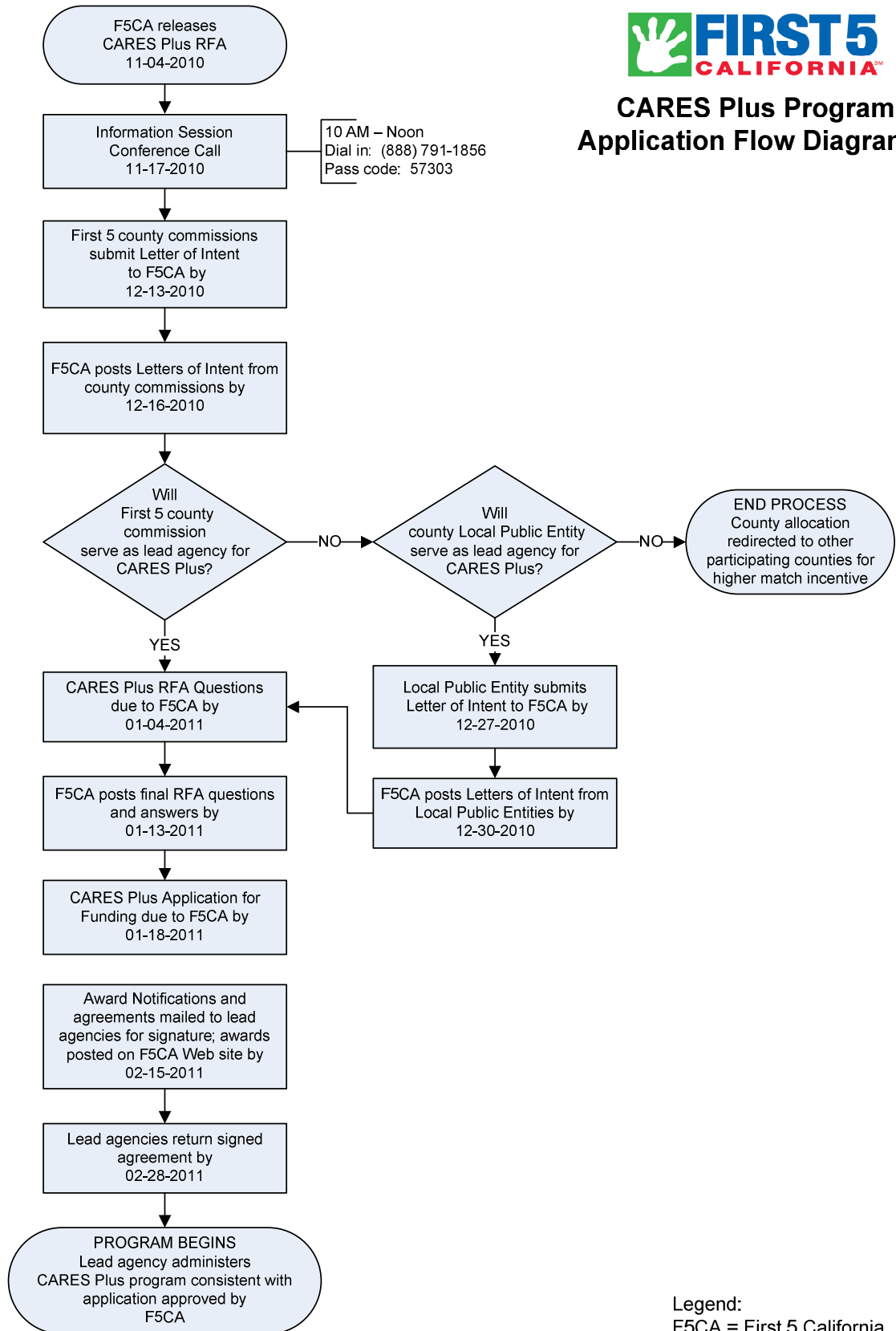
As a navigation tool for this Request for Application (RFA), we have created a set of flow diagrams to serve as “road maps” that will help foster a better understanding of the various requirements of the CARES Plus RFA along with their sequence. These visual aids have been designed to help the reader better understand the steps and actions that must be taken:

- 1) During the application process (*Flow Diagram I*),
- 2) In the creation of the local CARES Plus program (*Flow Diagram II*), and
- 3) By program participants (*Flow Diagram III*).

These flow diagrams are displayed on the next three pages.



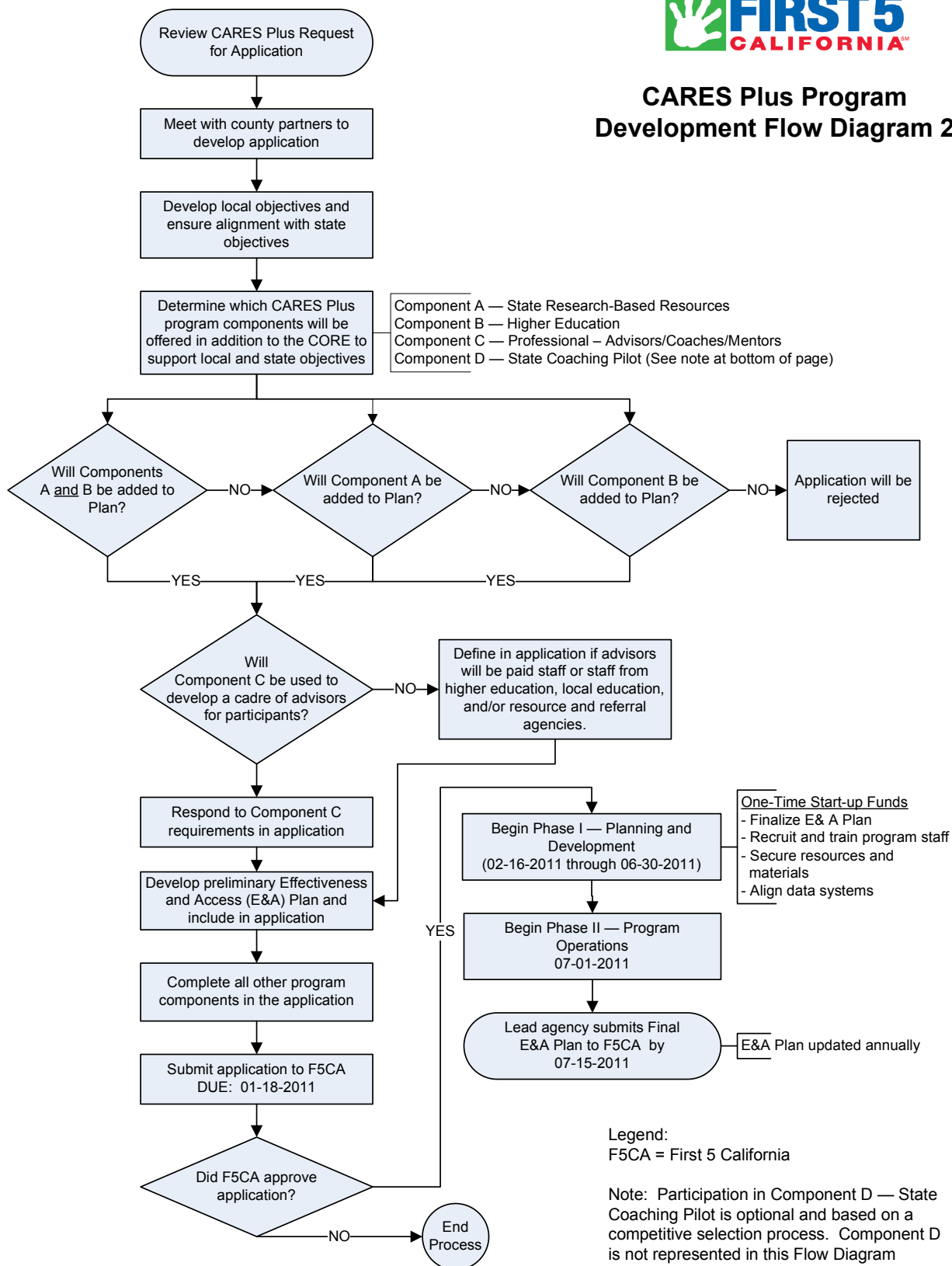
CARES Plus Program Application Flow Diagram 1



Legend:
F5CA = First 5 California

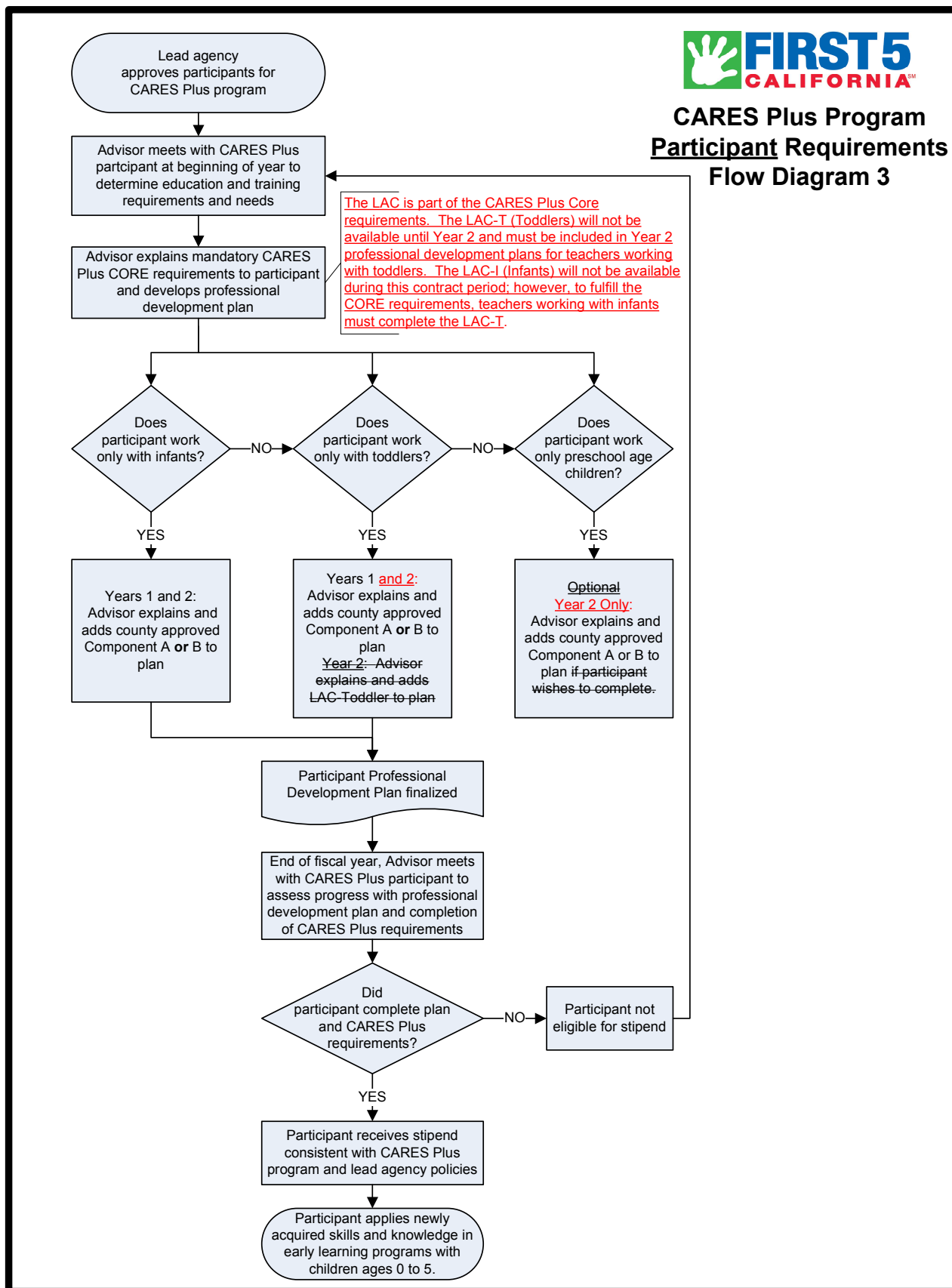


CARES Plus Program Development Flow Diagram 2





**CARES Plus Program
Participant Requirements
Flow Diagram 3**



I. INTRODUCTION

A. History of First 5 California

In 1998, California voters passed Proposition 10, the California Children and Families Act, which established the California Children and Families Commission (also known as First 5 California) to promote, support, and improve the early development of children from the prenatal stage to five years of age. Since its inception, First 5 California has launched innovative programs and services designed to help young children grow up healthy and do well in school and in life. The promise of First 5 California is to continue to invest in services and programs that directly benefit children and families, that build upon past successes and the latest research, and that advocate for a sustainable early childhood system for future generations.

In 2007, First 5 California adopted its current Strategic Plan which called for convening a workgroup designed to assess the ongoing viability of programs and to provide recommendations for Measurable Program Goals (MPGs). In July 2009, the workgroup developed a comprehensive preliminary set of MPGs for consideration. Through a statewide public input process, First 5 California staff shared these preliminary MPGs with the field to solicit feedback. At its October 2009 meeting, the First 5 California Commission approved the resulting MPGs and early learning Program Concepts. Staff then used these as the foundation for developing proposed Signature Programs designed for three specific audiences: Child, Teacher, and Parent. The Signature Programs build upon existing First 5 California programs with a proven track record of effectiveness, such as the Comprehensive Approaches to Raising Educational Standards (CARES), and embed measures to ensure accountability in preparing California's most vulnerable children for success in school and life. First 5 California views CARES Plus as its Teacher Signature Program and anticipates continued support in the future.

B. Background

The CARES Plus program is based on the latest research and best practices in the field of quality early learning programs. This section highlights the research-based underpinnings and other considerations that shaped the development of the CARES Plus program. (See Appendix A for a list of all articles referenced in this RFA.)

B.1 The Science — How Young Children Learn

The experiences children have as babies, toddlers, and preschoolers shape the kinds of students they will become as they enter the K-12 educational system. Neurological science shows us that the basic architecture of the brain is constructed through an ongoing process that begins prenatally and continues into adulthood. Early experiences affect the quality of that architecture by establishing a foundation for all later development, behavior, learning, and health. In terms of supporting healthy brain development, we also know that babies' brains actually require stable, caring,

interactive relationships with adults.¹ A highly skilled and well-qualified workforce is critical to the quality of an early learning environment, and even more importantly, that quality is linked to positive outcomes for children. In order to succeed, children need environments that will foster their healthy development and lay the building blocks for future learning and achievement.

B.2 The Challenges – Inadequate Quality, High Turnover, Insufficient Training, and Teacher Effectiveness

Research is consistent in demonstrating that if we want children — particularly children in poverty — to enter our public education system with the skills, abilities, and support they need to ensure the most positive experiences in school, we must start early by investing in the learning that begins the moment a child is born. Even with this evidence, a 2008 RAND Institute study shows that only 13% of California's low-income children participate in high-quality early learning programs. While nationally 72% of children under the age of five are in non-parental care arrangements, nearly 60% of U.S. early childhood centers are found to be of "inadequate or minimal" quality.²

Prior findings in the field suggest that the quality of care is closely related to the education, compensation, and retention of staff, and that teacher effectiveness is among the most important factors impacting the quality of early learning programs. Yet, workforce turnover plagues the field, with less than two-fifths of center-based early educators³ staying at the same job for five years or more. One reason for these statistics is the level of teacher compensation. The highest-paid teachers with Bachelor's degrees in early learning programs earn approximately only two-thirds as much as public school kindergarten teachers.⁴ In Fiscal Year 2007-08, the median salary of a CARES participant working in a center-based facility was \$24,000 per year. The median salary of a CARES participant working in a family child care facility was only \$20,000 per year.⁵ These figures represent less than half of the mean annual salary of \$50,370 for K-12 teachers in California.⁶

B.3 Quality and Links to Child Outcomes

Research demonstrates that quality early learning programs directly benefit children. The physical and organizational aspects of the early childhood classroom are often

¹ Center on the Developing Child, *The Science of Early Childhood Development*, IN BRIEF. Harvard University, Cambridge, MA.

² Karoly, L., Ghosh-Dastidar, B., Zellman, G., Perlman, M. & Fernyhough, L. (2008). *Prepared to Learn: The Nature and Quality of Early Care and Education for Preschool-Age Children in California*, TR-539-PF/WKKF/PEW/NIEER/WCJVSF/LAUP. http://www.rand.org/pubs/technical_reports/TR539/.

³ The terms early educator or teacher will be used interchangeably throughout this document and represent a broad category of terms including early learning teachers, caregivers, providers, and early childhood educators.

⁴ Whitebook, M., Sakai, L., Kipnis, F., Lee, Y., Bellm, D., Almaraz, M., & Tran, P. (2006a). *California Early Care and Education Workforce Study*. Berkeley, CA: Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, University of California at Berkeley, and San Francisco: California Child Care Resource and Referral Network.

⁵ First 5 California. (2008). *CARES Statewide Retention Study Final Report*. www.ccfca.gov

⁶ Bellm, D. and Whitebook, M. *Building California's Preschool For All Workforce, A SERIES OF POLICY BRIEFS. Compensation and Comparable Worth: What Lies Ahead for California's Preschool Teachers?*, Institute of Industrial Relations, University of California at Berkeley. Berkeley, CA.

the focus of quality assessment instruments, even though quality also includes instructional effectiveness and teacher-child interactions. The two-category typology for early childhood quality consists of: (1) “structural,” such as class size, teacher-child ratios, and teacher education levels; and (2) “process quality,” with characteristics that include “observable social and instructional interactions that children experience directly with teachers in the classroom.”⁷

Past research concluded that higher levels of structural quality, such as educational attainment and education with specialization in early childhood education, were related to observable higher quality (Barnett 2003; Whitebook 2003). However, recent findings, including a 2007 meta-analysis of seven past research studies, have raised questions about the strength and consistency of this association, appearing to challenge assumptions about the role of early educator educational attainment, while concluding that structural features of quality were minimally related to child outcomes (Early et al, 2006). Combined, these analyses did not provide convincing evidence of a significant relationship between teachers’ education level or major and classroom quality or children’s academic gains. While the researchers did provide possible interpretations of these unexpected findings, including the program context and the quality of the teacher preparation programs, a main conclusion is that while research has shown that college degrees are an important aspect of early learning, they are not sufficient to ensure quality or child outcomes.

Other recent findings, such as those from the National Center for Early Development & Learning’s (NCEDL) Multi-State Study of Pre-Kindergarten, revealed that process features were associated with children’s development and improved outcomes.⁸ According to a recent report by the U. S. Department of Education, “A consensus has emerged in the developmental sciences that the relationship a child has with a teacher or caregiver . . . is the central and most critical component of child care quality.”⁹ Moreover, the NCEDL research revealed that benefits produced by high quality interactions between early educators and children continued through kindergarten, with children scoring higher on reading skills and language measurements. Children who attended classrooms with high scores on the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS), an observation tool used to measure classroom process quality, made greater gains than children who were in classrooms with lower scores on the CLASS. These gains were maintained through kindergarten.

In order to support improved child outcomes, this knowledge base drives First 5 California’s efforts designed to improve the quality of interactions between early educators and children. To be effective, professional development¹⁰ opportunities must be intensive, sustained, and focused on educators’ success with children in their programs. Policy makers can draw on this research to design pre-service and in-

⁷ FPG Child Development Institute. (2008). *How is pre-k quality measured? NCEDL findings and new directions*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina, (p.8).

⁸ Pianta, R., Burchinal, M., Clifford, R., Early, C., et al. (2005). *Features of pre-kindergarten programs, classrooms, and teachers: Do they predict observed classroom quality and child-teacher interactions?* Applied Developmental Science, 9(3), 144-159.

⁹ U.S. Department of Education (2010). *Toward the Identification of Features of Effective Professional Development for Early Childhood Educators: Literature Review*. Washington, D.C. (p.2.).

¹⁰ Throughout this RFA, the term professional development refers to both academic, unit-based courses, and trainings.

service professional development opportunities that focus on quality emotional, organizational, and instructional interactions in programs and between early educators and children that support children's developmental outcomes.

The lack of association found between education levels and teacher quality indicates that policy recommendations that address teacher quality need to focus on what teachers know, along with their practice and interaction with children, rather than focusing solely on their educational attainment. Research indicates that "Quality teacher training can help build more effective teacher-child interactions, which can lead, in turn, to improved child outcomes."¹¹ It is crucial that early educator professional development activities improve knowledge, practice, and child outcomes.

B.4 First 5 California Launches CARES

In an effort to address the urgent statewide need to improve the quality and stability of the early learning workforce, First 5 California launched CARES in 2000-01 as a matching-funds program with 44 First 5 county commissions. CARES supported local programs by addressing the professional development and retention of early childhood educators through incentives and supports. During its tenure, CARES gained national recognition from organizations including Head Start, Zero to Three, and the Center for Law and Social Policy as a model for increasing the quality and stability of the early learning workforce.

State Commission approval for CARES funding concluded in December 2009 while the Commission and staff were determining which First 5 California programs would be developed as Signature Programs. In April 2010, the State Commission approved up to \$36 million for CARES Plus through July 31, 2013, and officially acknowledged it as the Teacher Signature Program.

Although its resources are limited, First 5 California acknowledges its unique position to make a difference within the current early learning system in California to ensure that children reach their full potential upon school entry and beyond. Continuing and enhancing the CARES program (through CARES Plus) allows First 5 California to build on the organizational infrastructure and positive momentum already created by the original CARES programs throughout the state. It also supports the alignment of CARES with California's major early childhood education initiatives. These include the California Early Learning Quality Improvement System Advisory Committee (CAEL QIS), which is charged with developing a state Quality Rating and Improvement System; the California Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC), which helps advance the state's collective efforts to develop a high-quality, comprehensive, and accountable early learning system that links to federal programs; First 5 California's Power of Preschool (PoP) Program; and investments in Educare.

¹¹ Whitaker, S., Kinzie, M., Kraft-Sayre, M., Mashburn, A., & Pianta, R. (2007). *Use and Evaluation of Web-based Professional Development Services Across Participant Levels of Support*. Early Childhood Education Journal, Vol. 34, no. 6. (p.379)

C. Purpose of CARES Plus

Building on the success of CARES and continuing the successful partnership with the California Department of Education's AB 212 Program, CARES Plus is a statewide professional development program for early educators designed to improve the quality of early learning programs by focusing on increasing the quality, effectiveness, and retention of early educators. Its main objective is to improve both the quality of early learning programs and, ultimately, to improve young children's learning and development outcomes. CARES Plus continues to provide incentives/stipends, training, and higher education access that collectively serve to support participants by increasing their teacher effectiveness and qualifications in early childhood education. First 5 California also will provide technical assistance to local CARES Plus programs and participants.

Findings from the research on brain development, coupled with young children's need for positive, sensitive relationships with effective caregivers, form the underpinnings driving CARES Plus. The program moves to a focus on improving early educators' practice and the effectiveness and quality of their interactions with children ages 0 to 5. The evolution from CARES to CARES Plus reflects a need to narrow our program objectives. Targeting the CARES Plus public investments is even more crucial because of a variety of factors, including a desire to:

1. Support improved teacher effectiveness and practice;
2. Focus on improving child outcomes;
3. Support readiness at the local level for a Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS);
4. Align with the federal direction around effectiveness and increased accountability; and
5. Gain research knowledge to support future investments in areas that demonstrate positive impacts on children's development.

In order to support the focus on improving early educator effectiveness and the quality of teacher-child interactions, **CARES Plus includes two phases: Phase I – Planning and Development, and Phase II – Program Operations and Requirements.** During Phase I, county programs will address start-up issues while program implementation will commence in Phase II. Including a Planning and Development Phase allows counties the time to focus in depth on their accountability, data collection and data systems, and evaluation plans, and also to fully develop their local collaboration and Effectiveness and Access Plan.

CARES Plus also includes several new program components that are described in Section II: CARES Plus Program. These include the use of the rigorously researched CLASS Observation Tool, along with several CLASS-aligned professional development supports. Additionally, there is an embedded and enhanced focus on accountability and outcomes at all levels. With diminishing resources, public investments in education must demonstrate solid results for children. The information gathered through CARES Plus will be used to guide and inform policy makers to make data-driven decisions regarding how and where to best invest in California's early educators and young children and will help make the case for program continuation.

What is the CLASS Tool?

The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) is an observational tool developed by the University of Virginia to assess the effectiveness of classroom interactions. It focuses on the quality of interaction between teacher and child and provides a common lens and language to focus on what matters — classroom interactions that boost child learning. CLASS looks at **how** teachers use the physical environment (materials, curriculum, etc.) of the classroom to interact with children.

CLASS is organized to assess three broad domains of interaction between teacher and child that take place daily. These domains are: Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, and Instruction Support. For a description of each domain, see Appendix E — CLASS Framework for Early Childhood and Elementary Classroom Quality.

The CLASS tool has been proven to produce positive results. Research shows that the assessment tool and related feedback increase teacher effectiveness. Children in classrooms with higher CLASS scores achieve at higher levels than their peers in classrooms with lower CLASS scores.¹²

D. Funding Authority

Statutory

Health and Safety Code (HSC) Section 130105(d)(1)(B) authorizes the expenditure of funds from the California Children and Families Trust Fund to ensure that children are ready to enter school and for programs related to education including, but not limited to, the development of educational materials, professional and parental education and training, and technical support for county commissions.

HSC Section 130125 (i) specifies First 5 California's authority to enter into contracts and allocate funds to county commissions as necessary or appropriate to carry out the provisions and purposes of the California Children and Families Act.

First 5 California Children and Families Commission Authorization

In April 2010, the First 5 California Children and Families Commission approved funding of up to \$12 million a year for three years beginning in FY 2010-11 through FY 2012-13, to support the CARES Plus program.

E. Eligibility for Funding

First 5 California is issuing this Request for Application (RFA) to fund county-level partnerships that focus on meeting the educational and professional development needs of the local early learning workforce. Counties are encouraged to collaborate with one

¹² Teachstone. *Effective Teacher-Student Interactions: Measuring and Improving Classroom Practice*.

another to create cohesive programs, share resources, and to reduce administrative costs. Cross-county collaboration is especially encouraged for small counties.

E.1 Eligible Applicants

First 5 County Commissions

First 5 county commissions have priority to apply for CARES Plus program matching funds and to serve as the lead agency for the CARES Plus program in their respective counties. To establish its designation as the lead agency,¹³ the First 5 county commission must submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) for First 5 county commissions (Form 1) and a Collaborative Partners List (Form 3) by December 13, 2010. First 5 county commissions have the “first right of refusal” for these funds.

Local Public Entity (LPE)

A Local Public Entity (LPE) is eligible to apply for funding in the event the First 5 county commission chooses not to participate as the lead agency. An applicant LPE must be located within the county it wishes to serve, or within the region if several counties wish to join the LPE collaborative for CARES Plus. The LPE will assume the role of lead agency and must submit a Letter of Intent for lead agency (Form 2) and a Collaborative Partners List (Form 3) by December 27, 2010.

Note: For purposes of this RFA, a local public entity includes, “a county, city, district, public authority, public agency, and any other political subdivision or public corporation in the state, but does not include the State.” (California Government Code, Section 940.4)

E.2 Responsibilities of the Lead Agency

The lead agency will be responsible for fiscal oversight and program accountability. A lead agency must be located within the county or within the region if several counties are a part of the LPE collaborative. All lead agency applicants, if other than the First 5 county commission, will be required to provide evidence of existing capacity to carry out and implement programs to meet the goals of CARES Plus. Examples of this capacity are best demonstrated where those entities have provided early educator supports and/or professional development.

The LPE must provide evidence that reflects the existing capacity to provide early learning workforce services and administrative, fiscal, and program oversight. The LPE must include in its application package its mission statement, goals and policies, a description of its organizational structure, and a list of any early childhood accreditations achieved.

¹³ The term lead agency is used throughout the RFA to refer to the local agency that ultimately submits the CARES Plus Letter of Intent and application (either a county commission or a LPE).

E.3 Creating a Consortium

It is expected that each lead agency will develop a consortium consisting of organizations with the same goals and objectives to improve the quality of early learning. These consortia, at the local level, should include, at a minimum, the First 5 county commission, local higher education institutions, Local Child Care Planning Councils, local Resource and Referral agencies, AB 212 local initiatives, and non-profit agencies and organizations providing services for children ages 0 to 5. Consortia members also may include local state education agencies, County Offices of Education, Early Head Start, and Head Start programs.

E.4 First 5 County Commission Letter of Intent (LOI)

The deadline for First 5 county commissions to submit both an electronic and hard copy of the required LOI forms, with the original signature of the First 5 Executive Director or designee, is December 13th, 2010, 5:00 p.m. Electronic submittals will be posted on the First 5 California Web site as they are received.

Note: Submission of electronic copies of the LOI forms DOES NOT take the place of submitting hard copies of the LOI forms. First 5 California must maintain a hard copy of the LOI with an original signature for audit purposes. Failure of a First 5 county commission to submit the LOI forms by the required deadline will be deemed a non-response, and that First 5 county commission will forfeit its right to exercise lead agency status.

First 5 County Commission LOI Submission Requirements		
Due Date	Action	Forms Required
December 13, 2010	First 5 county commission must submit the original LOI with the signature of the Executive Director, or designee, electronically and in hard copy.	Form 1 Form 3
December 16, 2010	First 5 California posts LOIs submitted by county commissions on First 5 California Web site.	N/A

In the LOI form, the county has five choices from which to communicate its level of participation in the CARES Plus program. The county may elect to:

1. Participate in the CARES Plus program as the lead agency by indicating it will submit an application for the CARES Plus RFA.
2. Participate in a CARES Plus county or regional consortium developed by the local public entity, but will not be the lead agency.
3. Partner with another First 5 county commission (or commissions).
4. Not participate at all in the CARES Plus program.
5. Be considered to participate in the State Coaching Pilot Option.

Collaborating with another First 5 county commission or becoming part of a LPE's consortia is to be decided among the parties involved. First 5 California will not be involved in this decision process. Please remember, **only ONE application will be**

accepted per county. Applications received from multiple entities within a county will be returned and not reviewed.

E.5 Local Public Entity Letter of Intent

In the event a First 5 county commission does not submit a LOI, First 5 California will accept a LOI from a LPE that wishes to establish itself as lead agency for these funds. First 5 California will post on its Web site by December 16, 2010, all LOIs received from First 5 county commissions. LPEs have until December 27, 2010, to submit their electronic and original hard copy LOIs.

Local Public Entity LOI Submission Requirements		
Date	Action	Forms Required
December 27, 2010	LPEs must submit the original LOI with the signature of the Lead Administrator (with legal authority to enter into contracts), or designee, electronically and in hard copy.	Form 2 Form 3
December 30, 2010	First 5 California posts LOIs submitted by LPEs on First 5 California Web site	N/A

Note: Submission of an electronic copy DOES NOT take the place of submitting a hard copy of the LOI. Every local public entity is required to submit a hard copy of the LOI by December 27, 2010, at 5:00 pm.

There will be only one application accepted per county or region. If on December 27, 2010, more than one local public entity from the same county submits a LOI, those entities will be asked to collaborate and decide among themselves which one will be the lead agency for the county or region. First 5 California will not be involved in this process. You will have until January 10, 2011, to decide who will be the lead agency. Please remember, **only ONE application will be accepted per county. Applications received from multiple entities within a county will be returned and not reviewed.**

II. CARES PLUS PROGRAM

A. From CARES to CARES Plus

CARES Plus builds on the successes of the original CARES program. As with the original, CARES Plus is a matching-funds program that includes incentives and other teacher supports designed to improve the quality of early learning for children ages 0 to 5 through the quality training, support, and retention of early educators. Many of the original program's key features can be found in CARES Plus, such as research-based training and higher education opportunities, along with incentives (stipends) for teachers to participate in the program.

Also, like the original CARES, which included several optional components for participants (e.g., tracks), CARES Plus also offers program options. In addition to the **Core program**, which all participating counties must implement, CARES Plus also includes four program components (**Components A, B, C, and D**), some of which are

optional. Through the CARES Plus' Core program and additional Components, local programs will offer participants incentives/stipends, research-based training, and higher education access that collectively serve to support early educators by increasing the quality of their practice and qualifications in early childhood education.

As part of the **Core Program**, participant requirements include meeting with an Advisor, submitting a Professional Development Plan, taking the "Introduction to the CLASS" (an observation tool), using the "Looking at CLASSrooms" video library, and participating in training on the dangers of second-hand smoke.

The **Components** of CARES Plus offer participants a range of options designed to enhance teacher effectiveness, including participation in research-based training (Component A), the completion of higher education courses (Component B), advising opportunities (Component C), and possible participation in a state coaching pilot (Component D). Even though the county may be incorporating more than one Component in its local program, participants may add only one additional Component to the required Core.

A new and key feature of CARES Plus is a local program support effort to provide each county with the time and additional resources to plan the structure of its local CARES Plus program prior to beginning program operation. In order to support the program objectives in section B below and the new focus on improving early educator effectiveness and the quality of teacher-child interactions, **CARES Plus includes two phases designed to enhance planning and implementation:**

- Phase I – Planning and Development
- Phase II – Program Operations and Requirements

Phase I – Planning and Development is an initial planning phase, for which counties will receive an allocation that does not require a local match. Once Phase I is complete, the next phase of CARES Plus – **Phase II – Program Operations and Requirements** – encompasses all program implementation requirements from July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2013. Phase II does require a local match.

Phase I is described in section II.C and Phase II is described in sections II.D – II. K.

B. Program Objectives

CARES Plus is a professional development program targeting early educators working with children ages 0 to 5 with inter-related objectives and Measurable Program Goals (MPGs):

1. Increase the effectiveness of early educators;
2. Increase the quality of teacher-child interactions;
3. Increase the qualifications of a culturally and linguistically diverse workforce;
4. Increase retention of early educators in programs and in the field;
5. Increase wages and/or incentives for early educators;

6. Increase the quality of early learning programs and the number of passing scores or higher scoring programs on a Quality Rating and Improvement system (QRIS);
7. Increase alignment with California Department of Education (CDE) research-based resources and guidelines; and
8. Improve outcomes for young children.

In addition, as a First 5 California funded program, CARES Plus also includes some additional smoking cessation related MPGs:

9. Decrease the number of children ages 0 to 5 exposed to secondhand smoke; and
10. Increase the total number of and access to quality trainings for 0 to 5 service providers on smoking cessation and related smoking illnesses.

C. Phase I – Planning and Development

Phase I allows counties the time to focus intensively on their accountability, data collection, and evaluation plans and also to fully develop their local consortium and corresponding Effectiveness and Access (E&A) Plan (see Part C.2 below). In Phase I, counties will receive **allocations** to support their efforts to fully develop local E&A Plans and establish resources needed for full program operation beginning July 1, 2011. There is no local match requirement for the one-time Phase I funding.

C.1 Consortia Partners

Providing quality early learning programs for children ages 0 to 5 requires meaningful partnerships at many levels. The CARES Plus model is predicated on the power of partnerships – among public and private funders, various sectors of higher education, and alternative providers (including training providers), and at state and local levels. CARES Plus requires interagency collaboration among local agencies such as, but not limited to: county commissions, two- and four-year higher education institutions and alternative providers, community-based organizations, local educational agencies, provider and educator associations, and other stakeholders. Consortia should include other professional development partners with similar goals, such as Early Head Start, Head Start, and Migrant Education, and should work to ensure shared use of resources, training opportunities, seminars, and classes, etc.

To ensure non-duplication of services and maximization of local funds, all local CARES Plus Programs must coordinate with their Local Child Care Planning Councils (LPC) and the AB 212 local initiatives. Use Form 6 to document support of the LPC as well as any other partner agencies. Additionally, although participants can receive stipends/incentives only from AB 212 or CARES Plus funds, they may receive support services or participate in Component D (if selected) regardless of their incentive source. **All program elements and requirements for each of the CARES Plus Core and the Components – A, B, C, and D – are described later in this section.** Additionally, Phase II will be described later in this section beginning with Section II.D.

C.2 Annual Effectiveness and Access Plans

Through their consortiums, local CARES Plus programs are required to develop and implement an annual Effectiveness and Access (E&A) Plan and may use state and/or local matching funds to support included activities. The Phase I allocations are specifically targeted to support the development and launch of this work while Phase II funds may be used to support the E&A Plan's continued implementation. Included in the E&A Plan and work are outreach, supports, integration, and alignment pieces – all with the goal of helping early educators become more effective in their work with children.

Through their annual E&A Plan, local CARES Program consortiums need to facilitate the recruitment, training, professional development, mentoring, and coaching of an expanded pool of qualified early educators. The E&A Plan must include creating the programs and opportunities needed by the local workforce and also address articulation and higher education pathways, course content, student readiness, and the remedy of obstacles that interfere with student success in obtaining degrees in early childhood education or related fields.

The E&A Plan and consortia work must focus on improving the quality of professional development, ensuring that it is applicable and relevant (including training and course work), and ensuring that early educators receive effective coaching, consultation, and mentoring. The goal of all approved CARES Plus courses and trainings must be to enhance the knowledge base of early educators so as to improve teacher effectiveness that results in higher achievement for children. The professional development must provide early educators with tools to infuse this knowledge into their daily classroom practices.

The E&A Plan also must describe how the consortia will ensure that the soon-to-be-released California Department of Education (CDE) Early Educator Competencies, other research-based CDE resources, and recent research findings will be incorporated into all course work and approved trainings. All professional development provided by local consortiums must:

- Be evidenced-based
- Reflect the Early Educator Competencies
- Align with CDE research-based resources, such as, but not limited to, the *California Infant/Toddler and Preschool Learning Foundations* and the *California Preschool Curriculum Framework*
- Infuse content with current research and knowledge of teacher effectiveness
- Address issues such as cultural and linguistic diversity
- Focus on improving child outcomes through effective teacher practices

Finally, the E&A Plan must address how the consortia will work to improve accessibility of courses and the articulation alignment between and across systems. The recent passage of Senate Bill 1440 (Padilla) will strengthen efforts to provide a more seamless transition for students transferring from public community colleges to four-year institutions, and, if effectively implemented, will remove this obstacle for

CARES Plus participants. Local consortiums must partner with local community colleges and four-year institutions to ensure that this is being implemented effectively and uniformly.

C.3 Data Collection, Data Systems, and Evaluation

Counties may use Phase I funding to establish, organize, and staff various processes and procedures in coordination with data collection, reporting requirements, and collaboration that will be required in Phase II. First 5 California is offering these Phase I funds to mitigate any delay in collection and reporting of accountability data. It is anticipated that at the commencement of Phase II program implementation activities, all accountability, data and evaluation efforts will be fully developed and these tasks will be seamlessly transitioned from planning to implementation.

D. Phase II – Program Design

After the completion of Phase I on June 30, 2011, Phase II begins on July 1, 2011, and will incorporate the program design, program core and components, and program operation described in the rest of Section II. During Phase II, counties will begin the implementation of their local CARES Plus programs.

D.1 Program Design

CARES Plus consists of a **Core** set of required elements for all participants **plus four program Components** that contain additional participant requirements:


- Component A: State Research-Based Resources
- Component B: Higher Education
- Component C: Advisors (optional)
- Component D: State Coaching Pilot (optional, and county participation in D will be determined through a competitive process)

A lead agency may design a program unique to its county based on the above program component options. Although not mandatory, it is possible for a local program to include all four components. Programs **must, at a minimum, include either Component A, B, or both**. Components C and D are optional. However, since only a limited number of counties may participate in Component D, participation will be decided competitively.

Although counties may offer multiple components, a CARES Plus participant can only participate in the Core plus up to one additional Component. A participant can not be in more than one Component. Evaluation data will be tracked at the participant rather than the county level.

The CARES Plus program design is presented in the chart on the next page and described in detail in the remainder of this section.

D.2 Program Design Chart

CARES Plus Program Design FY 2011-12 and FY 2012-13		
Components	Participant Requirements	Evaluation Requirements
CORE:  All participants are required to complete the Core components.	1. Meet with a CARES Plus Advisor and submit a Professional Development Plan 2. Introduction to CLASS 3. Looking at CLASSrooms (LAC) – includes Video Library* 4. CLASS Observation tool 5. Self-directed training on second-hand smoke	Pre- and Post- CLASS assessment (sample)*
PLUS: Programs may offer up to four components in addition to the CORE. Programs must add Components A or B, or can add both. Regardless of the number of Components incorporated in a local program, participants may only select one Component in addition to the required CORE.		
Component A: State Research-Based Resources	CDE sponsored training on research-based resources such as: Foundations, Preschool Curriculum Framework, Learning and Development System, Competencies, English Learners Guide (PEL), Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP 2010), Program for Infant/Toddler Care (PITC), and Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations in Early Learning (CSEFEL) – minimum 21 hours/year	Pre- and Post- CLASS assessment (sample)*
Component B: Higher Education	Lower Division 8 Core Coursework to Degree Focused Coursework – 6 units/year	Pre- and Post- CLASS assessment (sample)*
Component C: Advisors (Optional for Counties)**	Provide advising to CARES Plus Core participants and help them develop their Professional Development Plans	N/A
Component D: State Coaching Pilot (Competitive and Optional for Counties)	MyTeachingPartner (MTP, Evaluation Design – Criteria Selected or Randomized Sample)*. MTP is only for participants who are lead or master teachers or family child care owners/operators.	Pre- and Post- CLASS assessment (all)*

*LAC- CLASS Assessments and MTP not available for Infant teachers (working with children 0 to 18 months) and will only be available for Toddler teachers (working with children 18 months to 3 years) in Year 2.

*Although LAC-I is unavailable during this contract period. Teachers serving infants, in order to complete their CARES Plus CORE requirements, must take LAC-T during their second year along with Component A or B.

**While the use of Advisors is not optional for county programs, the use of CARES Plus participants for this service is. See pg. 25 for additional information on CARES Plus Advisors.

All Components focus on improving teacher effectiveness and the quality of teacher-child interactions. Additionally, although county programs are not required to offer a specific participant Advisor Component C, the use of CARES Plus Advisors is required of all participating county programs. Also, all unit-based courses in Component B must meet high quality standards, as well as emphasize the priority areas important to First 5 California (See Appendix K, CARES Plus Standards for Professional Development Activities).

County programs interested in participating in the State Coaching Pilot Component D must complete Form 11. All interested counties will be scored using a 17-point rating scale, and randomized selection of individual participants is required as a condition of participating in CARES Plus.

E. Phase II – Participant Annual Requirements

CARES Plus participants must engage in a series of annual requirements including: meeting with a CARES Plus Advisor¹⁴ and submitting a Professional Development Plan, participating in a series of evidence-based trainings and resources geared toward improving the quality of teacher-child interactions, and allowing for independent observations using a validated evaluation tool.

County programs may increase the minimum requirements, including the Component requirements, as long as the program continues to demonstrate participation of early educators from Priority Zones and **licensed** FCC Homes (see page 25). Programs will provide updates through Quality Performance Reports (QPR – see page 48 for additional information on QPR requirements) and the CARES Plus Database information. County programs also must provide appropriate support services, or demonstrate the availability of these services to help participants meet the standards for successful and continued participation.

Participants working with **preschoolers**¹⁵ will be eligible for a CARES Plus stipend after completing all the **Core Requirements and are not required to add an additional Component until their second year in CARES Plus.**

Participants working with **infants or toddlers** (and not preschoolers) will be eligible for a CARES Plus stipend after completing **all the Core Requirements (minus LAC) plus** requirements in one additional component (either Component **A, B or D**).

All participants enrolled in Component C must participate in LAC regardless of the age group with which they work.

F. Phase II – Core Requirements

In addition to meeting with a CARES Plus Advisor, the CARES Plus program Core consists of evidence-based training on teacher-child interactions that all participants will

¹⁴ See page 26 for use of CARES Plus Advisors.

¹⁵ For purposes of CARES Plus, preschool children will cover ages 3 to 5.

need to complete, and training on the dangers of second-hand smoke. As part of CARES Plus, First 5 California is offering several professional development tools that have been researched and designed by the University of Virginia. CARES Plus participants will have exposure to the CLASS Observation Tool through an on-line Intro to the CLASS session and will undergo a Web-based, self-practice reflection study, Looking at CLASSrooms (LAC),¹⁶ geared toward improving the quality of teacher-child interactions (see Appendix P for a more detailed description of this evidenced-based tool). Local CARES Plus programs must offer support to participants to ensure that information learned through these professional development tools is integrated into all aspects of the participants' classrooms. A random sample of participants (approximately 500 to 700) will receive two CLASS observations.

F.1 Meet with a CARES Plus Advisor and Submit a Professional Development Plan

All CARES Plus participants must meet bi-annually (upon entry into CARES Plus and near the completion of the program year) with a CARES Plus Advisor and submit a completed Professional Development Plan. Participants must work with Advisors to establish clear personal goals and objectives. The Plan must include a section on improving a minimum of two dimensions on the CLASS Observation Tool.

Participants Chosen for the Randomly Assigned CLASS Assessments

Based on their CLASS assessments, these participants must include within their Professional Development Plan an improvement plan targeting a minimum of two CLASS dimensions (Appendix E). The plan will be used to facilitate the discussion between the participant and his/her CARES Advisor and help him/her include a rationale for choosing specific coursework or professional development programs based on the CLASS results. Plans must include a method for tracking participant progress.

Participants Not Chosen for the Randomly Assigned CLASS Assessments

Participants not chosen for a CLASS assessment will need to choose from two CLASS dimensions based on areas in which they perceive they might need extra help after undergoing the *Introduction to the CLASS* online session and/or LAC.

F.2 Introduction to the CLASS – 4 to 6-hour training

All CARES Plus participants will be required to participate in a 4- to 6-hour Web-based training: *Introduction to the CLASS*. Although this tool is currently geared toward those working with preschoolers, everyone participating in CARES Plus will participate in this session during summer/fall 2011. By fall 2012, a special CLASS-T for participants working with toddlers will be available.

¹⁶ LAC is only for participants working with preschool age children in Years 1, and preschool and toddler in Year 2.

F.3 Looking at CLASSrooms (LAC) – 20 to 30 hours minimum

All CARES Plus participants working with preschool age children¹⁷ will undergo a self-reflection guided study via a LAC Web-based system. In year two, participants working with toddlers also will undergo LAC for toddler teachers. Self-study guides will be shared with participating CARES Plus Advisors. This will help guide the direction for the next year's participation in CARES Plus, including training, course work, and support services. LAC includes access to a video library from which participants can view footage on interactions. Accountability will be ensured through personal passwords and tracking of viewing time via the Teachstone data system. Participants will be required to keep a log of their use of this resource that will be shared with their CARES Plus Advisors.

~~Please note that because LAC will not be available for toddler teachers until fall 2012, toddler teachers during program year 2011-2012 must also be enrolled in Component A or B, in addition to the Core. Since it LAC will not be available for infant teachers during the currently approved program years for CARES Plus, participants working only with infants only will not participate in this Core piece and also will need to be enrolled in Component A or B. If a participant is enrolled in Component C, the participant must take LAC regardless of the age group he/she works with.~~

~~Please note that because LAC-T will not be available for toddler teachers until fall 2012, toddler teachers during program year 2011-12 must also be enrolled in Component A or B in addition to the CORE.~~

~~Since LAC will not be available for infant teachers during the currently approved program years for CARES Plus, participants working with infants must complete LAC-T and will also need to be enrolled in Component A or B.~~

F.4 CLASS Observation Tool

A subset of approximately 1,000 to 1,400 Cares Plus participants will receive a series of two CLASS assessments during the program year. The observations will occur close to the participant's entry into CARES Plus and near the end of the program year (approximately 8 to 10 months later). Half of those observed will be chosen through a randomized process, and every participant in Component D and receiving MTP will receive CLASS observations.

The CLASS scores will be shared with the participant as well as with the state and the state's evaluation designee as part of the statewide evaluation design. Information will be kept confidential. Those selected to have CLASS conducted must use their scores to work with a CARES Plus Advisor as part of their Professional Development Plan. The CLASS scores will not be used to determine whether or not a teacher receives a stipend.

¹⁷ LAC will not be available for Toddler Teachers until 2013 and for Infant Teachers until 2014. Any participant not eligible for the LAC must also be enrolled in Component A or B or D.

F.5 Self-Directed Training on Second-Hand Smoke

All CARES Plus participants will complete a Web-based, self directed-training targeting the dangers of tobacco use and exposure to young children and strategies for addressing those dangers (training developed by the California Smokers' Helpline).

G. Phase II – Additional Participant Requirements for Components A, B, or C

The following Components and corresponding participant requirements may be added on as a supplement to the Core requirements outlined above.

~~Participants adding a Component to the Core should receive higher stipends. Participants working with infants or toddlers, but not with preschoolers, must add a Component in addition to the Core in 2011-2012. Furthermore, continuing infant participants, in their second year or more of CARES Plus must add a Component. For the second year, toddler teachers must complete the LAC-Toddler and are not required to add an additional Component. Components available to participants are dependent on local program design and which Components the local program decides to offer. Participants must work with their CARES Plus Advisor to determine which locally offered Component best fits their Professional Development Plan.~~

~~Participants working with infants or toddlers, but not with preschoolers, must add a Component in addition to the Core in 2011-2012. Furthermore, continuing participants serving infants in year 2 must add a Component. Teachers serving toddlers in year 2 must complete LAC-T in addition to a Component.~~

~~Components available to participants are dependent on local program design and which Components the local program decides to offer. Participants must work with their CARES Plus Advisor to determine which locally offered Component best fits their Professional Development Plan (PDP). Participants adding a Component to the Core should receive higher stipend.~~

G.1 Participant Requirements for Component A: State Research-Based Resources

Component A highlights exposure to trainings on California Department of Education (CDE) research-based resources. The following training requirement is unique to participants who add on Component A. **This requirement must be completed annually, and is in addition to the Annual Participant Core Requirements:**

Actively participate in a minimum of 21 hours of CDE-sponsored trainings in one or more of the following areas:

- Infant/Toddler or Preschool Foundations
- Preschool Curriculum Framework
- Learning and Development System
- Early Educator Competencies

- Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP 2010)
- Program for Infant/Toddler Care (PITC)
- English Learner Guide (PEL)
- Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations in Early Learning (CSEFEL).

Local CARES Plus programs can use their funds to expand these offerings as needed for their participants.

G.2 Participant Requirements for Component B: Higher Education

Component B focuses on degree attainment in early childhood education and encourages early educators to complete requirements eventually needed for their site to qualify for higher ranking on the proposed Quality Rating Improvement System. The following requirements are unique to participants who add on Component B. **They must be completed annually, and are in addition to the Annual Participant Core Requirements:**

a. Minimum of 6 academic unit-based courses with a grade “C” or better.

All units must either be applicable to obtaining a degree and/or child development permit/CDA, or help a participant gain the necessary skills needed to obtain the degree or permit. This includes:

- ESL, linked, study skills classes, or unit-based ECE and GE classes.
- Courses that allow for participants to build skills needed to take degree/Permit applicable courses.
- Non-unit-based ESL courses taken through adult education programs that are based on comparable hours. (Example: 54 hours in a non-unit based course would be equivalent to a 3-unit-based course.)
- Degree needs to be related to ECE/Child Development and can have a focus on ECE special needs.
- Credential must be Early Education credential (as available) or Multiple Subject elementary school credential.

b. Courses must be taken in the following priority order:

- Lower Division 8, Core Classes (see Appendix J).
- Courses covering content related to improving children’s outcomes or of key interest to First 5 California and areas highlighted by research as key to children’s later academic and life success: Infant/Toddler, Language and Literacy, Dual Language, Numeracy, and Social/Emotional Development.
- Other courses that contain content that covers areas as designated for improvement on participants’ CLASS scores, subsequent conversations and plan development with CARES Plus Advisors.
- Other courses as required to achieve an AA or AS degree.
- Other courses as required to achieve a BA degree.

G.3 Participant Requirements for Component C: Advisors

When added to the Annual Participant Core Requirements, Component C allows participants to serve as a CARES Plus Advisor to participants in the Core.¹⁸ To be eligible for Component C, participants must have a minimum of a Bachelor's degree in early childhood education, child development, or a related field.

The following requirements are unique to participants who add on Component C. **They must be completed annually, and are in addition to General Annual Participant Core Requirements:**

- a) Complete a special Advisors section of Intro to CLASS (six hours) as well as participate in all other core requirements including LAC regardless¹⁹ of the age group participants serve.
- b) Attend a local CARES Plus program training that addresses First 5 California RFA requirements and information on local resources, as well as any Professional Growth Advisor Training chosen locally.
- c) Provide advising services to CARES Plus program participants including developing participants' Professional Development Plans.

¹⁸If a county does not elect to have CARES Plus Advisors through Component C, the county must provide CARES Plus Advisors through another means, such as paid staff. See pg. 25 for additional information on Advisors.

¹⁹CARES Plus participants in Component C who are acting in an Advisor role for their program do not need to meet with an Advisor themselves nor do they need to complete a Professional Development Plan.

H. Phase II – Component D: State Coaching Pilot

H.1 Background

Due to limited resources and a need to ensure the quality of implementation, Component D (State Coaching Pilot) will not be accessible to all participants. Through Component D, First 5 California will pilot an evidence-based professional development strategy aligned with the Classroom Assessment and Scoring System (CLASS), MyTeachingPartner (MTP), to a limited number of CARES Plus participants. This pilot will allow First 5 California to more closely assess this model while maintaining and assuring the quality of implementation and fidelity to an evidence-based model. It also allows the model to be fully evaluated as compared to other, more traditional professional development investments in the early educator workforce and ultimately help to determine if broader state investments should be made. First 5 California will evaluate use of MTP in California to capture the results and outcomes of this program. The findings will be shared as part of a growing body of research-based knowledge and will be used to direct future state-level policies and investments.

H.2 MyTeachingPartner (MTP) Information

MTP, which will be used in Component D, is a research-based, 10-month, intensive and ongoing coaching program that has been proven to boost effective classroom/program interactions and improve child outcomes. These strong outcomes are reflected in greater gains in language, math, and early literacy development. MTP provides interactive, relevant, and ongoing feedback to early educators through Web-mediated consultation and on-line resources. MTP coaches and teachers focus their work together using classroom/program videos and the CLASS assessment tool to identify specifically what areas need improvement to effectively help children learn successfully. Teachers and coaches using MTP use the CLASS as a guide. Prior evaluations of MTP indicate improvement in the quality of services provided by early educators participating in this professional development.²⁰ Only lead or master teachers are eligible to participate in the pilot.

H.3 Component D – Participant Requirements

The following requirements are unique to participants randomly selected for Component D. **They must be completed annually, and are in addition to the Annual Participant Core Requirements:**

- Participation in MyTeachingPartner (MTP), a ten-month video-based, one-on-one coaching model professional development tool (Component D), consists of approximately 500 to 700 randomly assigned lead teachers/**licensed** FCC owners/operators annually.

²⁰ Pianta, R., Mashburn, A., Downer, J., Hamre, B., & Justice L. (2008). *Effects of web-mediated professional development resources on teacher-child interactions in pre-kindergarten classrooms*. Early Childhood Research Quarterly, pp 431-34451.

- The delivery method for this evidence-based professional development is digitally-recorded classroom interactions sent via email to coaches, a Web interface, and bi-weekly telephone calls. Teachers chosen to participate in MTP will receive year-long, one-on-one support, all teacher materials, a video camera kit, a CLASS Dimensions Guide to support their work, and the MTP Web interface. Teachers must have access to a computer with high-speed Internet and a quiet space outside the classroom for a phone conference every other week.

Participants in Component D will work closely with their coaches to:

- Explore their interactions with children using video from their classrooms to identify areas of strength. (MTP teacher digitally records portions of the classroom activities every two weeks and sends them to an assigned coach.)
- Build on strengths and find new, effective ways to interact with children that increase child learning and school success.

Participation consists of, but is not limited to:

- Recording classroom interactions (using a digital recording camera) of participants working with children every two weeks for ten months.
- Sending the biweekly recordings to their coaches.
- Reviewing short video clips that have been edited by their coach of those classroom interactions.
- Responding to questions and feedback from a coach including a biweekly telephone conference call between participants and their respective coaches.

H.4 Component D – Participation Numbers

Approximately 500 to 700 CARES Plus participants will participate annually in Component D. Participants must be lead teachers or **licensed** Family Child Care (FCC) owners/operators. The total two-year program participation will consist of approximately 1,000 to 1,400 early educators. CARES Plus participants in Component D must remain in this part of the program for one year to complete MTP. Continued participation in Year 2 in another program component (Component A, B, or C) is strongly encouraged. Participants may receive evaluation follow-up for several years that will impact the results of this pilot.

Total program participation per year is limited to between 500 to 700 lead/master teachers and **licensed** Family Child Care (FCC) owners/operators. Participants will be chosen as follows:

- Year One – 500 to 700 preschool lead/master teachers and **licensed** FCC owners/operators.
- Year Two – 500 to 700 preschool and **toddler** lead/master teachers and **licensed** FCC owners/operators.

H.5 Component D – Program Requirements

Selected pilot counties must agree to the following program requirements:

- Allow First 5 California to randomly assign a total of 500 to 700 lead/master teachers or family child care providers to the MTP professional development training.
- Allow participants to be placed on a wait-list and given priority assignment for the following year if participation interest exceeds available enrollment.
- Be responsible for communicating, coordinating and connecting local program participants with First 5 California MTP paid coaching staff.
- Offer an additional stipend to participants for successful completion of the 10-month training opportunity.
- Have a written program retention plan among program years to allow for ongoing assessment and evaluation. (Please attach the retention plan to the application).
- Provide the support services needed to assist participants in the successful completion of MTP.

H.6 Component D – Pilot Selection Criteria

First 5 California has developed selection criteria for participation in Component D that incorporates the Signature Program focus on targeting investments to at-risk children. This includes criteria around communities with at-risk children and families as well as providing additional points to counties who already have focused on increasing teacher effectiveness and qualifications and on increasing the quality of early learning programs to improve child outcomes. The following criteria will be used to select a limited number of counties and participants for the Component D pilot.

a. Past participation in CARES	One point for each CARESround of participation Total = 4 points
b. Current participation in the Power of Preschool Program	Participation in PoP = 2 points Participation in PoP Bridge = 1 point County has local PFA effort = 1 point Total = 4 points
c. Percentage of children on the Centralized Eligibility Wait-List (CEL)	% of children on CEL as compared to statewide CEL* Total = 2 points
d. Percentage of families living in poverty	% of families living in poverty as compared to federal poverty levels** Total = 3 points
e. County financial commitment beyond program requirement	4 Points: County provides a match of four times the amount of match required (over match) in CARES Plus 3 Points: County provides a match of three times the amount of match required (over match) in CARES Plus 2 Points: County provides a match of two times the amount of match required (over match) in CARES Plus 1 Point: County provides over the required match in CARES Plus but less than two times over Total = 4 Points
*See Appendix N **See Appendix O	
Total Maximum Point Available = 17 points	

Interested counties must complete Form 11, Component D State Coaching Pilot Selection Criteria, in order to be considered for participation in the pilot.

I. Phase II – Program Operations and Requirements

While the prior section described the program Core and Components, this section will describe how counties will operationalize their local programs beginning in Phase II, Program Operations and Requirements (July 1, 2011 – June 30, 2013). In Phase II, implementation of the full program commences and participants begin work on their CARES Plus Program requirements. County programs may use their state and local matches to support requirements in Phase II.

In CARES Plus, programs must meet specific requirements and provide services as outlined in this RFA. They are required to:

- First target early educators in communities that are considered Priority Zones²¹
- Provide incentives for participation
- Provide support service incentives to early educators who participate in CARES Plus
- Provide Advisors to help participants develop their Professional Development Plan
- Integrate the First 5 California Principles on Equity into the program
- Access the training and resources at the California Smokers' Helpline
- Link their work to improving participants' effectiveness as teachers and their interactions with children.

I.1 Target Population

The CARES Plus Program target population consists of early educators who work with children ages 0 to 5, including home-based providers, licensed ~~and license-exempt~~ Family Child Care Providers, Family Child Care Assistants, and center-based educators in public and private child care programs. Center-based programs that have teaching and administrative staff who directly supervise those working with children ages 0 to 5 and meet the qualifications outlined below are eligible to participate in the CARES Program, regardless of job title and program type. Additionally, if such programs exist locally, efforts must be made to increase the number of Migrant Education early educators in the CARES Plus Program.

I.2 Priority Zone

CARES Plus requires that each county consortium target its efforts in Priority Zone communities in which: (1) there is a low supply of licensed child care, and (2) the local school ranks within the bottom five deciles of California's Academic Performance Index (API). Refer to the California Department of Education Web site for school API ranks (<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/ap/>) and the California Child Care Resource &

²¹ Priority Zones are communities where there are either low performing schools and/or a low supply of licensed child care providers, infant/toddler, special needs, and migrant.

Referral Network's Web site under resources and links/county info and agencies (www.rrnetwork.org) to identify areas of low supply of licensed child care.

State matching funds should first be used with participants from these Priority Zones and eligible low performing school communities. These funds should be used to develop and support effective outreach strategies that target **licensed** Family Child Care (FCC) Providers, Migrant Education early educators, and early educators who offer high need care to infants/toddlers or children with disabilities and other special needs. These outreach strategies also must include culturally and linguistically diverse members of the early learning workforce in order to ensure that participants reflect the diversity of the children being served.

I.3 Local Stipends for Participation

Local CARES Plus Programs must include in their design a stipend that is graduated (based on a sliding scale), depending on the level (that is locally determined) and on the intensity of the component and annual requirements met by the participant. Additionally, programs must take into consideration the following conditions and offer higher stipends or additional increments for these:

- a. The level of participation in the state and/or local evaluation;
- b. Whether the participant underwent a CLASS assessment;
- c. Whether the participant is participating in Component D, the State Coaching Pilot;
- d. The time commitment and effort needed to complete the training in Component A;
- e. The educational attainment (number of units achieved each program year) and goals of the participant; and
- f. The number of years a participant remains an active participant in CARES Plus (for example, an increased stipend/bonus for every additional year of participation in the program).²²

For Component C (Advisor), the stipend package shall be commensurate with either the hours worked or the number of other participants served.

I.4 Release of Stipends

Stipends may be released to participants only at the end of the program year upon successful completion of all annual requirements and verification by the local lead agency that all CARES Plus requirements and Components have been completed or met.

I.5 Program Support Services

All CARES Plus programs must offer services to increase program access and to support participants' success both in completing CARES Plus requirements and in

²² Past participation in the prior CARES program will not be considered for purposes of determining an increased stipend amount for CARES Plus.

incorporating the acquired knowledge and skills into their practice. This can be supported through means such as, but not limited to: cohorts, coaching, tutoring, lending libraries, and courses offered in other venues and in multiple languages.

These support services should include:²³

- a. Technical assistance and application assistance to early educators who are potential CARES Plus Program applicants.
- b. Supports for English language learners, such as: ESL and linked classes (English as a Second Language with Child Development); classes and materials, including curriculum and texts, in languages other than English; or an English course with a translator.
- c. Supports and classes that help participants acquire the necessary skills to obtain a degree or the Child Development Permit.²⁴
- d. Higher education work that addresses curriculum alignment, the development and implementation of new priority coursework, and coaching/mentoring programs.
- e. Additional State Research-Based Resource trainings as needed for participants.
- f. Multilingual educational and career supports, including tutoring, homework assistance, career advisor/counseling, and an academic/course advisor.
- g. Links to financial aid and scholarships, books (may include lending library), and/or financial support²⁵ to attend unit-based classes and evidence-based training.
- h. Supports for integrating theory and knowledge into effective practice.
- i. CARES Plus Advisors to review participants' annual Professional Development Plans.²⁶

I.6 CARES Plus Advisors

As part of the Core, all CARES Plus participants must meet with a CARES Plus Advisor. To incorporate the services of CARES Plus Advisors, a program may: (1) pay staff to act in the capacity of a CARES Plus Advisor; (2) pay for position(s) housed at a college, a local education agency, or a R&R; or (3) choose to incorporate the optional Component C designed to provide stipends to participants who will act in the role of Advisor to other participants.

The role of a CARES Plus Advisor is to assist participants in developing the mandatory Professional Development Plan and connect it to clear program goals and objectives. In the plan, Advisors must help participants focus on improving the

²³These are required supports for participants that CARES Plus Programs must either support financially or link participants to existing accessible services.

²⁴For a list of supporting courses that may be considered by a CARES Plus Program, see Appendices J and K.

²⁵CARES Plus participants must exhaust all other financial aid resources (e.g., Child Development Training Consortium stipends, federal loans, etc.) before CARES Plus programs may offer any tuition assistance. In addition, programs may choose to pay for a contract class specific to CARES Plus participants.

²⁶For purposes of CARES Plus, a Professional Development Plan can be a college Education Plan provided that the local program adds on the other required components per Appendix K, CARES Plus Standards for Professional Development Activities.

effectiveness of their practice and the quality of their teacher-child interactions, as well as help them think through needed steps toward obtaining a degree and advancing up the Permit Matrix.

All CARES Plus Advisors must know and understand the local CARES Plus Program, college degree requirements, the Child Development Permit, and the First 5 California RFA requirements. The Advisors should also be familiar with other related community links and resources and have knowledge of recent research on increasing teacher effectiveness and practice.

If the services of a CARES Plus Advisor are provided through other opportunities within the county, then the CARES Plus Program can link to those services. The program must ensure that the services meet the needs of the CARES Plus participants and that the information provided to participants, covers the specific requirements for the Permit and degrees as well as local and state CARES Plus requirements. To ensure non-duplication with college or academic counselors, local programs need to coordinate and may build off of or enhance those services.

1.7 First 5 California's Principles on Equity

On October 18, 2001, the First 5 California Children and Families Commission adopted the Principles on Equity. These principles serve to ensure that California's children from diverse populations and those with special needs are integrated into the planning and implementation of programs supported by Proposition 10. A respected group of leaders in early childhood development, health, and special needs served to outline the parameters and craft the Principles on Equity.

The Principles on Equity address four major areas, each of which must be incorporated in all CARES Plus Programs:

- Inclusive Governance and Participation
- Access to Services
- Legislative and Regulatory Mandates
- Results-based Accountability

See Appendix F for more information.

1.8 Smoking Cessation

In an effort to decrease the number of children ages 0 to 5 exposed to secondhand smoke, all CARES Plus Program participants are required to participate in smoking cessation training. At a minimum, CARES Plus programs must:

- a. Require participants to complete a self directed-training targeting the dangers of tobacco use and exposure to young children and strategies for addressing those dangers (training developed by the California Smokers' Helpline and supported through a contract with First 5 California at no-cost to county CARES Plus programs).

- b. Incorporate into their work tobacco cessation messages directed toward families and staff.
- c. Promote the availability of tobacco cessation services provided through the Smokers' Helpline by posting a link to the California Smokers' Helpline on the lead agency Web site and wherever else appropriate.
- d. Disseminate tobacco cessation educational materials developed by the California Smokers' Helpline to program participants to share with families.

First 5 California's contract with the California Smokers' Helpline supports its availability to assist CARES Plus Programs in their efforts to incorporate tobacco cessation training and messaging into their program targeting staff and families and will provide technical assistance whenever possible.

J. Phase II – Participant Eligibility Requirements

To participate in CARES Plus, early educators must meet higher requirements than in previous versions of CARES. Those who choose to participate must be truly committed to increasing both their knowledge and their practice as well as increasing positive outcomes for the children in their programs. They also will be adding to a body of knowledge that will inform future First 5 California policy decisions and investments in professional development and early educator supports.

The following criteria apply to the use of both **state funds** and any **local funds** used to obtain the state match, and apply to all participants and components. Local funds above the match requirement need not adhere to these criteria.

Early educators will be eligible to receive state and local match CARES Plus funds if they meet the following **minimum** entry requirements in addition to the Annual Requirements:²⁷

- a. Has provided child care or worked in an early learning program for pay in a licensed facility, or a facility that is legally exempt from licensure (as determined by the California Department of Social Services/Community Care Licensing [CDSS/CCL] Division), under the following conditions:
 - Minimum of 9 months during the year prior to receiving stipend with demonstration of working a minimum of 15 hours per week during that same period.
 - Worked with children 0 to 5 in a California-based licensed ~~or license-exempt~~ FCC home, state preschool, Head Start, or child care center for at least 9 months during the past year.

²⁷The state eligibility requirements are the minimum qualifications required for participants in the CARES Plus Program for the state and local match portion of the funds. It is at each lead agency's discretion to increase eligibility requirements to best meet their county's needs while still reflecting the aim of this project as stated in the RFA including reaching priority zones. Counties wishing to have educators participate who do not meet the minimum qualifications must utilize local funds not used to obtain the State Match.

- b. Is a licensed provider, works in a licensed facility, or is legally exempt from licensure. If participants are not licensed, they must achieve licensure by the second year of participation in the CARES Plus program, with the exception of those providing care in the child's home, those working at a public school-based site, and those employed in a facility exempt from licensure by the CDSS/CCL Division. (These facilities are exempt from licensure because they are either administered by a tribal council or located on a U.S. military installation.)
- c. Provides care in a Priority Zone.
- d. Earns less than \$60,000 annually in child care salary.
- e. Is working in only one county in California and is not applying for or receiving AB 212 funds.²⁸
- f. For Component C only: To be eligible, participants must have a minimum of a Bachelor's degree in early childhood education, child development or a related field.

K. Phase II – Continuation Requirements for Participants

In order to continue in CARES Plus, participants must have met all of the Entry and Annual requirements from the previous year. They must meet the CARES Plus Core requirements and meet bi-annually with a CARES Plus Advisor and complete an updated Professional Development Plan. The Introduction to the CLASS and LAC are not required again unless the participant works solely with toddlers or with infants. Participants working with those age groups will need to undergo a new Introduction to CLASS Webinar and LAC geared specifically to their target age group once those are available. Additionally, in their second year in CARES Plus, participants must choose one of the Components (A, or B, or C) and follow the requirements specific to their chosen Component.

Components available to participants are dependent on local program design and which Components the local program decides to offer. Participants must work with their CARES Plus Advisor to determine which locally offered Component best fits their Professional Development Plan.

L. Technical Assistance and Support

First 5 California will provide technical assistance and support to funded agencies. This support includes, but is not limited to:

1. Providing access for all CARES participants to the "Introduction to the CLASS" Webinar and to LAC. These expose participants to the CLASS Observation tool and to effective practices.

²⁸ Although participants can receive stipends from only either AB212 or CARES Plus funds in a program year, they may receive support services through the local CARES Plus program or be in Component D regardless of their stipend source.

2. Providing technology support, either directly or through a contractor, specific to the transmission of annual program evaluation data, and all aspects of data collection and reporting relating to the CLASS.
3. Training a cadre of certified CLASS assessors to conduct CLASS observations and to provide coaching support through MTP.
4. Provide access to resources from the California Smokers' Helpline including trainings, materials and a 1-800 line.
5. Conducting meetings to provide support on administering the CARES Plus program, continuous program improvement, incorporating the CLASS countywide, and other topics.

III. PROGRAM EVALUATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

A. Overview

First 5 California recognizes that accurate data collection and reporting are critical to program evaluation and allow for the assessment of progress toward meeting program goals and objectives. Previous evaluation efforts of CARES show the benefits of an educated, trained, and stable early learning workforce. Building on programmatic benefits as demonstrated in the original program and innovative national promising practices in professional development for the early learning workforce, the CARES Plus program evaluation is designed to measure classroom quality in the areas of emotional support, classroom organization, and instructional support through the use of the CLASS assessment tool. The multi-dimensional program design and corresponding evaluation will help First 5 California determine how well the program is working, what aspects work best and for whom, and how to strategically target scarce resources for optimal impact. In addition, the evaluation may also provide data to answer the following questions:

1. What is the impact of specific interventions (unit-based coursework, LAC, and MTP) on teacher effectiveness as measured by the CLASS? Are these effects retained over time?
2. To improve child outcomes, where should First 5 California target investments in teachers' professional development?

First 5 California will use CARES Plus participant and assessment data to analyze the effectiveness of professional development strategies in achieving outcomes, such as increased quality of early educator practice, early learning education in unit-bearing courses, training, and professional development of early educators. CLASS assessments will be conducted on a segment of CARES Plus program participants to evaluate the impact of a variety of factors, including training, education, and other supports for the CLASS domains and dimensions, as described in Section II of this RFA. Data also will be used to conduct cost-effectiveness analyses of each program strategy. Evaluation findings will be documented and distributed to summarize the cumulative effects of

CARES Plus training, education, and coaching strategies. Findings will inform First 5 California State Commission policy direction and funding decisions for future workforce initiatives.

B. County Collaborative Data Responsibilities

Participating CARES Plus collaborative agencies must agree to **fully participate** in the CARES Plus statewide evaluation by:

1. Attempting to obtain confidentiality consent forms from all CARES Plus participants
2. Collecting and inputting annual CARES Plus participant data into the CARES Plus Database
3. Working in collaboration with First 5 California partners to facilitate collection of CLASS assessment data into the CARES Plus Database
4. Completing an Annual Quality Performance Report (QPR) via the CARES Plus Database
5. Agreeing to participate in additional program evaluation efforts as determined by First 5 California

The aforementioned requirements are described in detail below.

B.1 Confidentiality Consent Forms

First 5 California requires all participating lead agencies to request permission from CARES Plus Program participants to take part in the CARES Plus program evaluation using Appendix H, "Consent to Participate in the Evaluation of the Comprehensive Approaches to Raising Educational Standards (CARES) Plus for the Early Learning Workforce." This Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved consent form contains language that allows for the transfer of participant information to First 5 California or First 5 California's designees for evaluation purposes. First 5 California strongly encourages full participation in the CARES Plus evaluation in order to demonstrate program outcomes needed for continued investments; however, a CARES Plus participant who declines to participate in the CARES Plus evaluation may still participate in the CARES Plus program.

Participant signatures obtained on Appendix H serve as assurance of the participant's willingness to take part in the CARES Plus program evaluation. Should an individual initially consent to participate and later choose to opt-out of evaluation, Appendix I, "Request to Cease Participation in the CARES Plus Program Evaluation," ensures their information will not be included in future evaluation efforts. These forms are available in English and Spanish.

Note: Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval for this project is updated annually. First 5 California will notify Programs of any updates to the above forms and of any new procedures, as applicable.

B.2 CARES Plus Database: Participant Data

All CARES Plus programs must collect, update, and report required participant information. Programs must enter and update all required data fields (identified in Appendix L) into the CARES Plus Database.

In order to ensure accurate and reliable data across programs, the CARES Plus program must use data variable names and values (identified in Appendix L) to collect and report required participant information. Data input into the CARES Plus Database must be completed by March 1 (for previous fall semester or quarter data) and October 1 (for previous winter quarter data and/or spring semester or quarter data) each year.

Lead agencies using a locally created and funded data system (other than the CARES Plus Database) must agree to provide required data as described in Appendix L. First 5 California will provide one format for data uploads to the CARES Plus Database. First 5 California will distribute the specifications for data submission in Spring 2011. It is the responsibility of the lead agency to comply with First 5 California's file upload specifications and upload the program data in the specified format on the required due dates. First 5 California will not provide support to lead agencies using data systems other than the CARES Plus Database. Lead agencies may use Phase I Program and Development allocations to coordinate their data collection and data management with the CARES Plus Database.

NOTE: Additional information on the CARES Plus Database will be provided to successful lead agency applicants during the award process.

B.3 CARES Plus Database: CLASS Assessment Data

First 5 California will use the CLASS assessment instrument as an evaluation tool for CARES Plus. The CLASS measures observed teacher-child interactions (a measure of quality) in classroom experience and describes levels of quality in three domains: Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, and Instructional Support.

A subset of all CARES Plus participants will be randomly selected to undergo a series of CLASS observations by a trained CLASS-certified assessor. All selected CARES Plus participants must agree to this assessment throughout the term of their CARES Plus participation. The CLASS assessment observations will occur close to the participant's entry into CARES Plus and near the end of the program year (approximately 10 months later). CLASS scores will be shared with the CARES Plus participant and her/his CARES Plus Advisor to assist with the development of the Professional Development Plan (described on page 16), as well as with First 5 California and their designated statewide program evaluator, as part of the overall statewide evaluation. All CLASS assessment data are kept confidential.

Data-entry of CLASS assessment scores will be conducted by the CLASS-certified assessor into the CARES Plus Database or state designated data collection system to ensure confidentiality.

B.4 Annual Quality Performance Report (QPRs)

CARES Plus county programs are required to submit an annual Quality Performance Report (QPR) which summarizes local program outreach strategies, county consortium efforts, quality of program implementation, local trainings and support services offered to participants, local performance measures and targets, updates to the local Effectiveness and Access Plan, as well as any local evaluation findings. The annual QPR will be submitted on or before October 1 of each year via the CARES Plus Database.

See Appendix M for a complete description of the required QPR data.

B.5 Additional Evaluation Efforts

First 5 California will use program evaluation data to monitor progress and inform continuous improvement and technical assistance activities. This may require additional input from CARES Plus programs obtained either through periodic meetings, focus groups, interviews, and/or other strategies as deemed appropriate and necessary by First 5 California.

First 5 California may contract with an independent evaluator to assist in additional research studies to augment program evaluation. Additional research studies may include a link between teacher education/training and child outcomes at a classroom and community level. Lead agencies will be notified in advance of planned research activities. Additional research activities will be performed in compliance with written consent forms.

C. Local Evaluation

The First 5 California CARES Plus program evaluation is designed to document program outcomes on a statewide level. This evaluation does not preclude consortiums from conducting their own local evaluations. CARES Plus programs are encouraged to coordinate local evaluations to fully demonstrate local outcomes and successes.

All First 5 California-funded CARES Plus programs are required to participate fully in the statewide evaluation and any research studies developed by First 5 California. Failure to submit CARES Plus evaluation and/or QPR data as required in this RFA may result in First 5 California withholding reimbursements.

IV. COUNTY ALLOCATION AND FUNDING METHODOLOGY

A. Phase I – Planning and Development Funding

First 5 California has reserved a total of \$3.7 million for planning and development activities for the CARES Plus program for all participating counties.

Phase I – Planning and Development funds will be authorized for expenditure in FY 2010-11 for the period of February 16 through June 30, 2011, upon receipt of a fully executed agreement. There is no match requirement for Phase I funding. The Planning and Development funds may not be rolled over into the subsequent fiscal year and are only available in the first year (through June 30, 2011).

The following table represents the maximum funding allocation amounts reserved for each county by County Category for Phase I – Planning and Development activities. (See Appendix Q to determine county funding categories).

Phase 1 – Planning and Development Funding Allocations	
County Category	Amount
Group A	\$20,000
Group B	\$25,000
Group C	\$75,000
Group D	\$150,000
Group E	\$200,000

Phase I funding may be used to achieve the funding objectives specified in Section II.C as well as developing the consortia partners and the Education and Access Plans and working on their data collection, data systems and evaluations specified in Section II.C.

A.1 Allowable Use of Funds

Phase I – Planning and Development Funds may be used to assist with developing and implementing the Effectiveness and Access Plan. Allowable uses of funds include salaries, information technology infrastructure and services, training and education, recruitment, and research and evaluation planning costs for the activities described below:

- Initiating or building on current outreach activities to reach the population targeted under program requirements;
- Developing and/or renegotiating memorandums of understanding and/or contracts with proposed collaborative partners serving CARES Plus participants, such as Local Planning Councils, AB212 sites, Head Start and

Early Head Start sites, community-based organizations, local and county education agencies, etc.;

- Developing and/or enhancing curriculum alignment and articulation agreements with two- and four-year institutions of higher education;
- Recruiting and training of staff to implement the CARES Plus program requirements;
- Purchasing resource materials aligned with Component A;
- Aligning local evaluations and data systems to meet the requirements of this RFA; and
- Providing direct services to participants, such as starting the CARES Plus application process or developing Professional Development Plans with CARES Plus Advisors.

B. Phase II – Program Operations Funds

The maximum amount of program reimbursement funds available for the CARES Plus program operations are up to \$7.1 million per year for all participating counties.

B.1 County Allocations and Match

For Phase II, a condition of the application requires a demonstrated local investment in the CARES Plus program in the form of a cash match or cash match contribution.

An annual and total First 5 California allocation amount and match requirement is assigned to each County Category, as represented in the table below (see Appendix Q to determine county funding categories).

CARES Plus County Categories, Allocations, and Match Ratios			
County Category	ANNUAL First 5 California CARES Plus Allocation Amount	TOTAL Two-Year First 5 California CARES Plus Allocation Amount	Match (State/Local)
Group A	Up to \$20,000 per county	Up to \$40,000 per county	2:1
Group B	Up to \$50,000 per county	Up to \$100,000 per county	1:1
Group C	Up to \$150,000 per county	Up to \$300,000 per county	1:2
Group D	Up to \$300,000 per county	Up to \$600,000 per county	1:3
Group E	Up to \$400,000 per county	Up to \$800,000 per county	1:4

Blending and braiding of funding to enhance current program activities is encouraged. Lead agencies may combine their funds with local partners to achieve the required

cash match amount. Allowable cash match funds may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Proposition 10 county tax revenue
- Federal (i.e., Early Head Start, Head Start, and ARRA)
- Local Workforce Investment Board
- Local Government
- Private foundation
- Grants
- Other gifts

In-kind (non-cash) investments cannot be used toward the local match requirement. Similarly, other state funds may not be included in the local investment for matching funds. Also, AB212 (Chapter 547, Statutes of 2000) may not be included in the local investment for matching purposes.

All cash match funds contributed to the CARES Plus Program must be expended in accordance with the provisions of this RFA.

Cash match dollars must be documented in a manner that is auditable and traceable.

B.2 Higher Match Incentive

First 5 California will use unallocated and unspent CARES Plus program funds in each fiscal year to provide a CARES Plus program direct service incentive. Counties that commit in their original applications to overmatching First 5 California's funds will be eligible for the year-end funding augmentation.

First 5 California will identify the statewide unallocated and unspent balance based on the number of participating counties, the approved applications, and year-end expenditure reports. First 5 California will then calculate an equitable distribution of the unallocated and unspent balances to those counties whose budgets indicated they will exceed the minimum matching requirement by at least 25%. The year-end expenditure report will be used to confirm the percent of increase over the minimum matching requirement.

First 5 California will disburse the incentive to eligible counties after all reported CARES Plus expenditures have been received and the overmatch percentages calculated. The incentive is an amount in addition to the county allocation amount and may be disbursed in a supplemental payment. There are no additional match requirements for this incentive.

V. HOW TO APPLY FOR FUNDING

A. Request for Application (RFA) Information Session

One CARES Plus RFA Information Session/Conference Call will be held via conference call to review the content of this RFA with potential applicants and to address questions. Due to a limited number of spaces, multiple callers from the same county are encouraged to call from a single site. This call will provide the opportunity to ask questions and receive information. Two phone lines are reserved for each county. The date, time, and location for the session are listed below.

Any county/agency submitting an application is encouraged to participate in this RFA Information Session/Conference Call.

Information Session/Conference Call

Date: November 17, 2010

Time: 10:00 am – 12:00 pm

Dial-in number: 1 (888) 791-1856

Pass code: 57303

Questions regarding this RFA will be answered during the information session/conference call. Additional questions regarding this RFA will be accepted **by e-mail, in writing, or by fax.** Please use "CARES Plus RFA Question" as the subject heading and send all questions to First 5 California:

E-mail: caresplus@ccfc.ca.gov

or

Fax: (916) 263-1379

B. Application Submission

Applications must be developed in accordance with the terms described herein. First 5 California **must receive the following by January 18, 2011, 5:00 p.m.:**

- An original signed application;
- Three copies of the original application (total of four hard copies); and
- An electronic version of the application sent to caresplus@ccfc.ca.gov with the title "XX County CARES Plus Application" as the Subject Header.

All copies of the application must arrive at the First 5 California office no later than January 18, 2011; by 5 p.m. **Applications received later than January 18, 2011, will not be accepted or reviewed.**

Applications must be complete when submitted. First 5 California holds no responsibility for the receipt or handling of applications that are not hand-delivered or received by the deadline. Applicants are encouraged to use express, certified, or registered mail, return receipt requested to confirm the date First 5 California receives the application.

Mail or hand-deliver applications to:

First 5 California
CARES Plus Application
2389 Gateway Oaks Drive, Suite 260
Sacramento, CA 95833

All applicants agree that by submitting an application, they authorize First 5 California to verify all claimed information.

C. Application Eligibility Period

The funding period covers February 16, 2011, through June 30, 2013, and shall operate on a state fiscal-year basis (July 1 through June 30).

D. Application Format and Components

This section outlines each required component of your application. Please follow this format and number responses accordingly. Please be sure to **address each component**. If a component is not fully addressed or these guidelines are not followed, the application may be considered incomplete.

Applicants must adhere to the following formatting guidelines for submitted applications: Arial 12-point font, single-spaced, one-sided, one-inch margins, and sequential page numbering. Do not include information other than that requested (e.g., videos, portfolios). Please staple; do not bind or clip. Please do not submit an application in a three-ring binder, folder, or with a cover and do not exceed the 25 page maximum limit for the Project Narrative and Description. Applications that do not follow the format outlined here will be returned as non-responsive.

A Local Public Entity (LPE) applying as the lead agency for a regional application that is interested in applying for Program Component D, must complete **Form 11, Component D State Coaching Pilot Selection Criteria**, for each county under its jurisdiction. For example:

*One **LPE** is applying to be the lead agency for First 5 county commissions 1, 2 and 3. They have chosen to form a regional consortium; therefore, as part of the selection process for Component D, each county is required to complete Form 11. An average of those three county scores will be used to determine the LPE score for that consortium.*

Each application must be submitted in the order outlined below. Please use the Application Checklist (Form 5) to assemble the completed application.

D.1 Form 4: Application Cover Sheet

The application cover sheet (with original signatures) is the first page of the application. Please use blue ink for the signature. Type, print, or stamp the word “original” on the original application.

D.2 Form 5: Application Checklist

The completed Application Checklist is the second document in the application package. Completion of the checklist will assure compliance with the application submission requirements.

D.3 Form 6: CARES Plus Funding and Collaborative Partners

This form is the third document in the application package.

D.4 Forms 7: Phase 1 – Planning and Development Budget FY 2010-11.

This form is the fourth document in the application and presents the FY 2010-11 budgets for proposed expenditures for planning and development activities.

D.5 Form 8: Phase 1 – Planning and Development Proposed Activities

This form is the fifth document in the application package and describes the activities proposed during the planning and development phase. This document also supports and explains the FY 2010-11 budgets.

D.6 Forms 9A and 9B – Phase II – Program Operation Budgets

These forms detail the proposed FY 2011-12 and FY 2012-13 CARES Plus program budgets and are placed after the program narrative component. The budget pages are in addition to and not included in the 25-page program narrative limit.

D.7 Project Narrative and Description (25 page maximum)

Each page of the narrative must display the following header: CARES Plus RFA Application, county name, and page number. Organize the response in the same sequence listed below.

a. Program Objectives and Design

Describe the following:

- i. Local objectives for the CARES Plus program.
- ii. How local objectives will be aligned with the state objectives.
- iii. How the local program design supports state and local objectives.
- iv. Which of the four Components (A, B, C, or D) in addition to the Core will be utilized.
- v. How the Core will be integrated with the other Components.

b. Target Population, Application Process, and Participant Stipends

Provide the following projections:

- i. The participant application and selection process.
- ii. Total number of participants in the Core per year: split into **licensed** Family Child Care (FCC) and center-based and total numbers for the two years.
- iii. Total number of participants for each applicable Component (A, B, and C) per year: split into (FCC) and center-based and total number for the two years.
- iv. Describe in detail the types and levels of incentives/stipends for the Core and for any additional Component. If you are applying to implement Component C, include how the incentive/stipend is tied to hours or participants served.

c. Priority Zone²⁹ and Principles on Equity

Provide descriptions of the following:

- i. Number of Academic Performance Index (API) Deciles 1-3 schools in the county.
- ii. Number of API Deciles 4-5 schools in the county.
- iii. Areas with low supply of licensed care in the county.
- iv. Other priority populations such as early educators serving infant/toddler, special needs, and migrant populations.
- v. Process that will be used to identify these areas and to establish who to target in these areas.
- vi. Unique outreach plans that will be used to target participants in Priority Zones, priority populations, and culturally and linguistically diverse populations.
- vii. Techniques and strategies that will be implemented to support representative participation of California's culturally and linguistically diverse populations including **licensed** FCC providers.
- viii. Methods that will be used to track and measure progress in serving: Priority Zones and/or priority populations, **licensed** FCC providers, and a culturally and linguistically diverse workforce.
- ix. Other methods that will be employed to ensure cultural and linguistic responsiveness by the program.

²⁹ See definition on Page 24 under "1.2 – Priority Zone."

d. Consortia and Effectiveness and Access (E&A) Plans

Provide a draft plan that includes, at a minimum, the following (final plan is due at end of Phase I on July 15, 2011):

- i. The local partner agencies included in the local consortia. The resources they bring to the consortia and their roles.
- ii. If the CARES Plus Program is administered separately from the local AB 212 program, describe how it will ensure that the two programs operate seamlessly or complement one another.
- iii. How the program will facilitate local partnerships to reduce barriers and create a more integrated and effective support infrastructure in the county.
- iv. Obstacles in the county that impede participants' progress.
- v. Steps the CARES Plus program or other partners have taken in the past to address these obstacles.
- vi. Effectiveness and Access goals for each fiscal year and what steps the collaborative will take to reach them.
- vii. How the program will focus on improving the quality of the professional development and ensure that it is applicable and relevant, incorporates the latest science and knowledge, and addresses early educator effectiveness.
- viii. How the program will ensure that participants are applying acquired knowledge and skills into their practice and interactions with young children.
- ix. How the consortia and E&A Plan will work to incorporate the soon-to-be released Early Educator Competencies, as well as other research-based CDE resources, into all course work and approved trainings.
- x. How the consortia and E&A Plan will work to improve the accessibility of courses and to improve articulation and alignment between and across systems.
- xi. How the consortia and E&A Plan will work to ensure that approved local training and courses meet the standards in Appendix K.
- xii. How the consortia and E&A Plan will work to integrate the new CARES Plus objectives.

e. Participant Eligibility Requirements

Describe the Entry Eligibility Requirements if they differ from the minimum RFA requirements. If they are the same, indicate that rather than describing them. If they differ for any additional Component(s), please list those as well. Include any exception for migrant programs. Request prior approval (approval not guaranteed) if there are other local exceptions to the 9-month requirement that you feel are necessary for your CARES Plus Program. Describe how you would address these needed exceptions in your county, if any.

f. Participant Annual Participation Requirements

Describe the Annual Participation Requirements for the Core if there are any additional requirements beyond the RFA minimum, along with a rationale for those requirements. If they are the same, indicate that rather than describing them.

g. Participant Annual Requirements for Components A, B, and C (Refer to Section II for Component descriptions).

i. Component A: State Research-Based Resources

Describe any additional requirements beyond the RFA minimums that are specific to the county along with a rationale for those requirements. If they are the same as the RFA, indicate that rather than describing them.

ii. Component B: Higher Education

Describe any additional requirements beyond the RFA minimums that are specific to the county along with a rationale for those requirements. If they are the same as the RFA, indicate that.

iii. Component C: Advisor (if applicable)

Describe any additional requirements beyond the RFA minimums that are specific to the county and provide a rationale for those requirements. If they are the same as the RFA, indicate that.

h. Participation Continuation Requirements and any Component-Specific Requirements

Describe the Participation Continuation Requirements (for participants in the second year or more of CARES Plus) and any Component-specific Continuation Requirements if there are any additional requirements beyond the RFA minimum, and provide a rationale for those requirements. If they are the same, indicate that.

i. Support Services

Describe the additional support services and professional development opportunities the program will offer to participants to ensure their progress in professional development, continuation in the program, advancement on the Child Development Permit Matrix and attainment of degrees, and enhancements in practice effectiveness.

j. CARES PLUS Advisors

Provide descriptions of the following:

- i. Use of CARES Plus Advisors.
- ii. Efforts made to ensure there are enough Advisors to meet the needs of participants.
- iii. Pay structure (i.e., paid educators or addition of Component C that uses CARES Plus participants).
- iv. Training requirements and supports for training.
- v. How the program will ensure that Advisors are helping CARES Plus participants focus on effectiveness in their practice and the quality of their teacher-child interactions.

k. CARES Plus Professional Development Plans (Plans)

Provide descriptions of the following:

- i. Required components in the Plans.
- ii. Application/use of the Plans.
- iii. Annual update process for the Plans.
- iv. Incorporation of the participants' CLASS dimension improvement section in their professional development.
- v. How participant progress will be supported for: personal goals and objectives, CLASS dimension improvement, and early educator effectiveness.
- vi. How participant progress will be tracked on: personal goals and objectives, CLASS dimension improvement, and early educator effectiveness.

l. Local Evaluations

Provide descriptions of the following:

- i. Beyond the statewide evaluation, any evaluation questions and objectives that will be addressed locally.
- ii. How these will be measured.
- iii. How the program will use the information obtained from the CLASS scores and other measures and evaluation results.

D.8 Component D – State Coaching Pilot Competitive Priority

If the lead agency is interested in applying to participate in Program Component D, the application must include a completed **Form 11**, Component D – State Coaching Pilot Selection Criteria. This form follows the budget pages and is the final form in the application. Also attach a participant retention plan to this form.

D.9 LPE Applying as the Lead Agency

Any LPE applying as the lead agency must also include in its application package: its mission statement, goals and policies, a description of its organizational structure, and a list of any early childhood accreditations achieved.

VI. ADMINISTRATIVE AND FISCAL ACCOUNTABILITY

A. Lead Agency

The lead agency shall be responsible for the oversight and administration of the CARES Plus program state-match funds. In this role, the lead agency shall complete and adhere to all fiscal and programmatic requirements described in this section and throughout the RFA.

The lead agency must provide assurances that are accurate and complete, and auditable records must be kept. The program will follow all fiscal reporting and auditing standards required by First 5 California.

B. Administrative Costs

Refer to Appendix C for the definition of “administrative costs.” **Administrative costs shall not exceed 15% of the total reimbursable costs (expended amounts).** It is the responsibility of the lead agency to ensure that not less than 85% of annual expenditures are used for direct services to participants.³⁰

Costs related to administration may include both **direct** program charges (lead agency costs related to preparing program plans, developing budgets, and monitoring activities; rental or purchase of program-specific office equipment or supplies; rental and maintenance of program office space) and **indirect** charges for general administration of the program (personnel, accounting, procurement, data processing). Any cost, direct or indirect, that supports management of the program is considered administrative in nature.

C. Annual Audit

The lead agency receiving and expending CARES Plus program funds must undergo an annual audit for the CARES Plus program. **The audit of CARES Plus must be conducted by a third party.** The audit will be conducted and records will be maintained in accordance with Government Auditing Standards (GAS) located at the following Web site: <http://www.gao.gov/govaud/ybook.pdf>. The lead agency is required to maintain auditable records, which must be made available, upon request, to representatives of First 5 California or its designee, or the State Auditor for on-site monitoring, reviews, and audits.

³⁰ Note: This applies only to Phase II funding.

D. Capital Outlay Expenditures

First 5 California funds may **not** be used for capital expenditures as defined by the First 5 Financial Management Guide and the additional guidance in Fiscal Memorandum No. 01-04 found on the First 5 California web site at (http://www.ccfc.ca.gov/pdf/annual_report_pdfs/FM01-04FixedAssets.pdf.)

E. Carryover Funds

The carryover of funds is not allowed.

F. Cash Match

First 5 California will reimburse the lead agency for the State portion of approved CARES Plus expenditures.

Additional leveraging (cash match contribution) of funds is encouraged. The lead agency may combine its funds with local partners (such as the county, a city, or private foundation) to achieve the total cash share required to meet the state-match ratio.

Local cash-match funds may include funds from Head Start or other federal funds, Proposition 10 county tax revenue disbursements, and other gifts, grants, and funds invested by a local partner. No other state funds may be used for this matching requirement.

First 5 California may determine an overpayment has occurred if the lead agency does not secure adequate matching funds.

Overpayment remedies are covered later in this section.

G. Dispute Resolution

The lead agency shall attempt to resolve disputes at the first staff level within First 5 California. If the dispute is not resolved at the first staff level, the executive director of the lead agency, designated as the CARES Plus administrator, may appeal the decision. Such an appeal can be made by submitting a written description of the issues and the basis for the dispute to the Chief Deputy Director of First 5 California within thirty (30) calendar days of receiving an initial response from the first-level determination of the dispute.

Within thirty (30) calendar days of receiving the lead agency's written dispute, the Chief Deputy Director will review the facts of the dispute, and if deemed necessary, will meet with the lead agency executive director or designee for purposes of resolving the dispute. The Chief Deputy Director shall make a determination and shall send written notification of the decision to the lead agency, together with the reasons for the decision, within sixty

(60) calendar days of the receipt of the lead agency's notification of the dispute. The decision of the Chief Deputy Director shall be final.

H. Financial Management Guide Compliance

If the lead agency is a First 5 county commission, First 5 California requires the lead agency to use the First 5 Financial Management Guide (Guide) terms and definitions when reporting to or communicating with First 5 California regarding the CARES Plus program. The guidelines and glossary contained in the Guide provide a common frame of reference and language for use between First 5 California and the lead agency when addressing financial matters. The First 5 Financial Management Guide is available on the First 5 California Web site at: <http://www.ccfc.ca.gov/commission/fiscal.asp>

I. Indirect Costs

Indirect costs for the CARES Plus program are considered part of administrative costs. The two costs combined cannot exceed 15% of the annual allocation amount. Indirect cost rates must be substantiated for the appropriate fiscal year.

J. Overpayment

If it is determined that the lead agency received an overpayment of First 5 California funds, First 5 California will seek recovery immediately upon discovery of overpayment by an invoice to the lead agency for a refund of the overpayment amount within thirty (30) days after receipt of notice.

K. Payments

First 5 California will issue payments for CARES Plus Phase I and Phase II expenditures on a reimbursement basis on the forms and in the format prescribed by First 5 California.

Payments may be withheld if reporting requirements are not met.

L. Reduction of Program Funding Authority

If First 5 California determines after the third quarter in FY 2011-12 that a lead agency demonstrates significant under-expenditure of approved program funds of 20% or more, First 5 California reserves the right to modify the funding allocation for FY 2012-13 based on prior year expenditures. First 5 California will inform the lead agency of its intent to modify the funding agreement by June 1 and issue a revised agreement. First 5 California will initiate this action only after consulting with the lead agency to assess its year-two capacity to fully expend the annual CARES Plus funding allocation.

M. Reimbursement Terms

CARES Plus funds may be expended only for the purposes detailed in the Request for Application (RFA) and consistent with the approved funding application or subsequent amendments, if any.

First 5 California will reimburse the lead agency for CARES Plus expenditures ~~semi-annually~~ **quarterly**, upon receipt and approval of a reimbursement invoice form that will be provided by First 5 California.

The lead agency may only expend funds received from First 5 California for CARES Plus for support services, stipends, management, evaluation, and other direct expenses provided through the CARES Plus RFA.

The lead agency will be reimbursed for actual costs that are reasonable and consistent with the performance agreement and approved budget.

Non-reimbursable costs include:

1. Alcoholic beverages.
2. Costs of promotional items and memorabilia including gifts and souvenirs.
3. Costs of advertising and public relations designed solely to promote the governmental unit, lead agency, or partners.
4. Bad debts, including losses (whether actual or estimated) arising from uncollectable accounts and other claims, related collection costs, and related legal costs.
5. Legal costs incurred in defense of any civil or criminal fraud proceeding; legal expenses for prosecution of claims against the State of California.
6. Costs of entertainment, including amusement, diversion, and social activities and any expenses directly associated with such costs (such as tickets to shows or sports events, meals, lodging, rentals, transportation, and gratuities).
7. Capital expenditures for general-purpose equipment, buildings, and land (items with a unit cost greater than \$5,000). Unit cost includes all costs required to make the item serviceable, such as taxes, freight, installation costs, site preparation costs, etc.
8. Costs of organized fund raising, including financial campaigns, solicitation of gifts and bequests, and similar expenses incurred to raise capital or obtain contributions.
9. Cost of goods or services for the personal use of the lead agency's and partners' employees regardless of whether the cost is reported as taxable income to the employees.
10. Cost of idle facilities or idle capacity are unallowable except to the extent that:
 - They are necessary to meet fluctuations in workload, or

- They were necessary when acquired and are now idle because of changes in program requirements, efforts to achieve more economical operations, reorganization, termination, or other causes which could not have been reasonably foreseen. Under the exception stated in this subsection, costs of idle facilities are allowable for a reasonable period of time, ordinarily not to exceed one year, depending on the initiative taken to use, lease, or dispose of such facilities.

11. Lobbying costs: the cost of certain influencing activities associated with obtaining program funding, grants, contracts, cooperative agreements, or loans are not an allowable cost.

12. Out-of-state travel is allowable only when the travel has received prior approval by First 5 California in furtherance of the program objectives.

13. The lead agency shall not use current year Agreement funds to pay prior or future year obligations. However, the cost of the annual independent audit may be claimed either in the Agreement period that was the subject of the audit or during the Agreement period in which the audit was completed.

Reimbursement payments will be made only to the lead agency holding the Agreement.

N. Reporting (General)

The lead agency is expected to adhere to the following fiscal and program reporting requirements:

- Participate fully in a formal evaluation and data collection process administered by First 5 California and/or its designee.
- Provide all progress reports, reimbursement requests, and evaluation reports as requested by First 5 California and as shown in Section VI.O Reporting Requirements.
- Account for revenues and expenditures (both State and local) of CARES Plus funds separately in the annual audit.

Failure to submit evaluation data or fiscal or program reports on any First 5 California program or initiative may result in withholding payments to the lead agency on this program or other First 5 California programs and initiative funding.

O. Reporting Requirements

CARES Plus program lead agencies must submit to First 5 California the following program and evaluation reports in the formats to be prescribed by First 5 California by the timelines specified:

Phase I – Completed Activities Report: CARES Plus county programs are required to submit by July 15, 2011, a Phase I – Completed Activities Report.

Quality Performance Report (QPR): CARES Plus county programs are required to submit an annual QPR that summarizes local program outreach strategies, quality of program implementation, local trainings and support services offered to participants, local performance measures and targets, as well as any local evaluation findings and an update on the E&A Plan. The annual Quality Performance Report shall be submitted on or before **October 1 of each year**.

Evaluation: First 5 California requires the lead agency to collect and update required participant information on the application or through subsequent contacts with participants via the CARES Plus Database. Data input into the CARES Plus Database must be complete by **March 1** (for previous Fall semester or quarter data) and **October 1** (for previous Winter quarter data and/or Spring semester or quarter data) each year.

Expenditure Reports: Participating counties will submit expenditure reports to First 5 California ~~twice~~ **four times** a year for actual expenditures incurred by the Program. These reports must correspond to those found in the attached budget forms. First 5 California will reimburse lead agencies the state-match share of funds expended based on the reported expenditures. Expenditure reports must be submitted quarterly consistent with the following schedule.

Expenditure Reporting Schedule	
Report Period	Due
Phase I Expenditures	
Planning and Development Costs	July 30, 2011
Phase II Expenditure Schedule for Each Fiscal Year	
1 st Quarter: July – September	October 30,
2 nd Quarter: October – December	January 31,
3 rd Quarter: January – March	April 30,
4 th Quarter: April – June	July 30,

Annual Audit: Lead agencies must submit an audit of CARES Plus program expenditures (local and county) in accordance with agreed-upon audit procedures or supplemental schedule to be determined by First 5 California. The audit is due to First 5 California by **November 1 of each year**.

P. Retention of Program Expenditure Records

State funds disbursed by First 5 California to the lead agency are subject to examination and audit by First 5 California or its designee, or the State Auditor, for a period of five (5) years after final payment of program expenditures. Therefore, adequate and accurate records must be retained for this period. First 5 California shall have access to the lead agency's offices and/or the CARES Plus sites, upon reasonable notice, during normal business hours for the purpose of interviewing employees and inspecting and copying books, records, accounts, and other material that may be relevant to a matter under investigation and for the purpose of determining compliance with the allowable uses of

the CARES Plus funds. First 5 California funding and all associated records will be included in an annual audit by the lead agency.

If the lead agency has more than one First 5 California program, then the method used to allocate administrative costs must be documented.

If an employee is multi-funded on a time accounting basis, then the employee's timesheet must indicate the actual amount of time spent in each program per day.

The lead agency must maintain accurate fiscal data, in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles and standards for governmental entities, and report actual expenditures by budget category on the CARES Plus Invoice Form. Information contained in the CARES Plus Invoice Form must be based on verifiable financial records.

Q. Supplement not Supplant

CARES Plus funds must not supplant existing local, state or federal funding; only supplemental costs may be charged. CARES Plus funds are intended to supplement and not supplant local funds. CARES Plus-funded consortiums are required to maintain, in each Priority Zone, a level of expenditure which is at least equal to the level of expenditure that would be maintained state funds were not being expended in that area.

No project or activity can be approved that proposes to provide a service required by State law. For example, any project to singly provide special education for children with disabilities cannot be approved because special education is already required by State law with special funds appropriated to pay for it. In like manner, basic kindergarten programs cannot be approved for the same reason.

In most cases, compensation for supervisory personnel (including superintendents of schools, directors of education, supervisors of instruction in regular curriculum areas, and principals) falls within the category of expenses that would be incurred if a school was not participating in CARES Plus. Such compensation would not be eligible for reimbursement unless additional administrative personnel are necessary and hired specifically for the purposes of the CARES Plus program. Extreme care should be taken in determining the applicability of the charges to the CARES Plus program.

Payrolls must be supported by time and attendance or equivalent records for individual employees. Lead agencies and wages of employees chargeable to more than one program or other cost objective must be supported by appropriate time distribution records. Blending and braiding of funding to enhance current programming is encouraged.

R. Termination of Agreement

First 5 California retains the option to terminate this Agreement without cause at First 5 California's discretion, provided that written notice has been delivered to the lead agency at least thirty (30) days prior to such termination date. If First 5 California terminates this Agreement at its discretion, the lead agency will be entitled to compensation upon submission of an invoice and proper proof of claim, in that proportion which its services and products were satisfactorily rendered or provided and its expenses necessarily incurred pursuant to this Agreement, up to the date when notice of termination is received by the lead agency ("the notice date"). The lead agency will not be entitled to reimbursement for any expenses incurred for services and deliverables pursuant to the Agreement after the notice date, unless the lead agency receives written advance approval from the State.